JAMES INGLETON.

JAMES INGLETON:

THE HISTORY OF A SOCIAL STATE.

A. 2,000. D.

BY

"MR. DICK."

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JAMES INGLETON:

The History of a Social State.

CHAPTER I.

THE shadow of night has fallen over London, and, as if by one mysterious hand, the arc-lamps are lit simultaneously in every street. The glass-domed streets are dry; yet amid the busy din and the whistling of the electric transports, the patter, patter can be heard of the falling rain. But above all other sounds rises a great sigh, and anon a moan, as of a human being in distress. It is the wind shrieking and sobbing, gust racing gust in a vain endeavour to assist its companion, the rain, to penetrate the roof of the city.

The Hall of Antiquity is situated in Concord Square. In the centre of the space is a fountain which is playing, and as the light falls upon the jets of water they seem transformed into sheets of silver. Round about are statues, allegorical sculptures, of Liberty, Equality, and the Brotherhood of Man.

Suddenly the only dark spot in the Square is lighted up. The Hall is about to be opened.

A curious building this, with its great eaves and enormous roof, which occupy at least twice the space of the frontage itself, like an enormous pigeon-cote in an exposed position. As the phono-chronometer of the City Hall bawls out "eight o'clock," the doors sink away, and a flood of light shows itself on a screen.

Passers-by stop to look at the white patch, upon which slowly appears the following announcement:—

"HALL OF ANTIQUITY.

THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY.

Mr. BOSTWELL will lecture this evening on

English History,

Period—1889 *to* 1970,

At 8.30 punctual."

In the lobby, some men and women congregate, and as they make their way to the interior, pass a few remarks.

"Best lecture for the last three months, I suppose?" says a portly man to an elderly female, who looks a "blue-stocking."

"Yes, yes, it will be very interesting, I have no doubt."

"Good," from the men as they enter; and

"Beautiful," "Delightful," from the women, are the principal remarks heard.

In the centre of the hall are arranged models of the various vehicles, machinery, and buildings in use at the end of the Nineteenth Century. Notwithstanding that the major portion of those who are to form the lecturer's audience are familiar with these curios, they are yet objects of interest.

The flooring of the hall is composed of papier-mâché squares, on each of which is a chair. These are ranged in rigidly straight lines. Before each row is a pair of rails. On the inner edge of the rail, exactly facing each separate chair, is a set of stoppers, marked with the names of various refreshments, and on the two outer ones are inscribed the words "down" and "up."

At the further end of the hall, behind the cases of curios, and partly hidden from view, is a wheel of peculiar workmanship; and above it, suspended from the ceiling, hangs a tablet, on which runs the following legend:

"The seating accommodation of the hall at the present time is 300," and beneath that—

"To increase same, turn wheel to the left; to lessen, turn to the right."

On the left, behind the chairs, is a screen some three feet in diameter, and around it this inscription:—

"A prismatic view of the Contents Bill of the *Half Hour* is visible on this screen immediately on publication of that Journal. Matters of great importance will also appear at other times when considered advisable."

On the right, so as to face the centre chairs, are a gramophone, a telephone, a kinteograph, and photophone apparatus, all on behalf of the newspaper mentioned.

The hall filled rapidly, and before long, someone approached the wheel described, gave it a sharp turn to the left, and re-adjusted the brake.

The figure "3," on the board above, turned into a "6"; the left and right walls moved with a slight whirr for a few seconds, then stopped, and seemed rigid as ever. A shrill tinkle of a bell, and the empty space became filled with chairs and rails, (similar to the other part of the hall), which rose up through the flooring.

A tall, dark complexioned, patrican looking man, whose lofty forehead betokened intellectuality, now entered the hall, being followed by a numerous party, including some fifty young men, on whose breasts were embroidered the letters "Y.A." They seated themselves at the farther end of the hall.

The tall man, who, as the reader guesses, was the lecturer, Mr. Bostwell, pressed the button marked "up" on the rail, and chair and all rose some four feet above the ground. From this vantage point he commenced his lecture. He said:—

"Fellow citizens, — In accordance with custom, now established some eight years, I will take up the thread of the last lecture, and that places me some six months forward in the year 1888. Towards the end of that year, a movement began, the like of which had never been heard of before. Labour troubles had been known, but that London, with its four and half million inhabitants, should be at the mercy of a hundred thousand men, headed by a few mere nobodies, staggered everyone. It was the period of the great Dock Strike. Fellow citizens, this labour war, this struggle of unskilled labour against the mighty power of capital, 'must be disastrous for the men.' Thus declared the papers of the day when this strike commenced. But with its vast processions, its combination, its union of unions, its determination, it at first awed the press into submission, and then proceeded to frighten its readers. For some weeks London was governed from the taproom of a refreshment house (a public-house, as it was called). Here, from a mean little room in a back street of the poorest locality of the 'Capital of the World,' the war was carried on. Suffice it, that the people won the day. Thus ended 1889. Its results were manifold: the men were emboldened, the various unions of labour drew vast numbers of adherents to their ranks, compelling many others to follow. In 1890, London was threatened with darkness. The gas workers (friends, gas was the light of the period,) refused to

work. Dismay, fear, trembling, seized the press and the people, and conciliation was the cry. But the great corporation was obstinate, the men obdurate, and, eventually the latter lost. Hundreds were starving. But, from this time, strikes became the order of the day, not one, but hundreds took place—here, there, and everywhere. As the earnings increased, so the necessaries of life grew dearer. In 1891, the successes of the working classes caused them to make increased demands. Albeit, they met with varying fortunes during the numerous skirmishes. The Unions split up, but a cry was re-echoed everywhere — from valley to mountain peak. What was it? you ask. I will tell you in a four-line doggerel often repeated at the time—

'Eight hours work,
Eight hours play,
Eight hours rest,
Eight bob a day.'

"But the demand really was for eight hours work at fair remuneration, made compulsory by leglislation. 'No man shall work longer than another,' was the argument of the workers, but they did not obtain their demands.

"It now becomes necessary to review history rather than give it in detail.

"During the next ten years, ministerial changes were frequent, ministers died, men changed places, and the labour war went on with varying fortunes.

But the eight hours' question was shunned by each government.

"In 1901, the census was taken, and, to the surprise of all, it was found that the population had remained stationary since 1891. What was the cause? Births had been normal; death, that grim, gaunt spectre, had not claimed more than the average number; and it was stated that immigration had brought many to these shores. Emigration had done it. The times had proved hard, food dearer, the ordering and marshalling of the labour unions was irksome, many sought therefore in happier climes what they could not find at home.

"In 1902, parliament was dissolved. A tenth of the people were starving, and a good proportion were obliged to live very close. The people cried for bread, the children's wan, pinched faces too well betokened the empty stomach. Party warfare went on. Many there were who called themselves labour candidates. A labour party was formed, and from that moment the cry 'eight hours a day' rose high above, and drowned that of 'got no work to do.' The constitutional liberal party, not to be outdone, offered extended suffrage — one man, one vote—every man a vote. The people were fed on paper, of which, tons were scattered about in the form of bills, circulars, and posters. These two parties gained the day together. The people having no food, were satisfied with a vote; and having no work were emphatic in declaiming

that they would not work more than eight hours a day.

"Parliament met, and great changes were expected. The liberal party being strongest, took the lead, and the suffrage question claimed precedence. Eighteen months elapsed before the bill passed—no other party having a hand in it, without introducing into the question its own pet hobbies. At length the champions of the extended franchise triumphed. A procession, consisting of a quarter of a million of persons, escorted the triumphant leaders to Hyde Park, which they reached at a quarter to five in the afternoon. Then they immediately dispersed. Those having any, hurried home to tea; and those who had none, were voted a pint per person by the Labour Union.

"'Now for the eight hours' question,' cried the people; but it did not get so far.

"Everybody having had his tea—which was always presided over by one of the feminine members of the household—proceeded to the public houses, drank many half pints of a liquid called ale, smoked long pipes, spat many times on the floor, and assured himself that it was the greatest day England had ever known. Then they all went to bed, not awakening from their lethargy for several months; in fact, just in time to discover that women had now demanded a vote, and that processions, meetings, petitions, canvassing, and teas—high and low—were in full swing on their part.

"Women a vote, meant women a seat in Parliament. The liberal and the labour parties being pledged to progressive legislation, naturally took twelve months to pass a bill in favour of female suffrage, when all at once the whole political apple-cart was upset, it being discovered that a law existed preventing legislation by females; and it requiring some time to revoke this law, the government appealed to the country.

"Although satisfied with the progress made, the popular vote returned the Conservatives, combined with the Labour Party. As these factions were antagonistic to each other, they fell to wrangling, and patching up quarrels, until the nation was disgusted.

"Thus, for fifteen years things went on; first with one party in power, then another; nothing happening to smooth the unevenness of political life.

"The Census of 1911 told the silent tale that the population had decreased by some per cent., and this added fuel to the fire. Huge co-operative schemes were tried, only to collapse. Times out of number, the labour question came forward, only to be put aside for more pressing subjects.

"In 1914, Women's Rights were formally acknowledged. The following year ten ladies were elected members of the Legislature. The year 1919 saw the beginning of the end. The Docks of London were found one morning with only sufficient work for five thousand men. Starvation was

increasing; and the want amongst the people was already so great that the children looked numbed, although it was summer.

"A Meeting—that panacea for all evils—was held. A man with a red tie cried, 'Down with the rich.' An enormous rabble surged westward, and looted the houses, breaking the windows of the goldsmiths' shops, and passing the bakers unheedingly. Reaching Nelson's Monument, which then stood in Trafalgar Square, they stopped, held another Meeting, and marched to the Parliament House. In front of this they set up such a screaming and shrieking, that it frightened the lady members, who were just taking their teas on the terraces. Having shouted themselves hoarse, the crowd turned, and wrecked all the public houses on their way home. At nightfall, a few thousand drunken men in the streets were all that remained of the disturbance.

"On the morrow, supplies were voted in Parliament; more regiments of soldiers ordered up to London; and the magistrates were told to be prepared to read the Riot Act.

"For four years this spark of rebellion continued to smoulder, and red neckties became very fashionable.

"In 1923, it was found that trade—and as a result, shipping traffic—and everything in fact, was at a very low ebb. The Census returns showed a further decrease. Whole neighbourhoods were depopulated. Land was at pepper-corn rents. Taxation was in-

creased in order to balance the exchequer. A rising took place in London and other towns. To subdue this, equalisation of taxes was proposed, and a bill to that effect passed. The Church of England was disestablished, and the House of Peers declared annulled. This latter measure was revoked; and it was declared that all titles would cease with the death of the then bearer. Thus the Monarchy tottered to its base. But it was not till 1930 that the system was overthrown. On the 13th of March, on a snowy morning, hundreds of houses were set in flames; several hundred thousand men, marched to the music of the Marseillaise through London, burning, looting, and destroying everything they came across.

"For forty eight hours London was at the mercy of these men. But regiments having been marched to the City, and the Riot Act read, the soldiers fired. Many thousands fell, only to be replaced by others. Hundreds of arrests were made, but to no effect. For every hundred soldiers drafted to London, a thousand men joined the rioters. Barricades were erected in the streets; the tunnels of the railways blown up; murder, fire, rapine, was everywhere. 'Liberty!' was the cry; and the red flag—the banner of blood—on all sides.

"The Royal Family hurriedly fled the country; and the soldiery, having no one left to guard, left the people to their excesses, in fact, joined them themselves.

"After a month's delay, a republic was formed. A President was chosen, and out of chaos came order. But it took two years! Meanwhile, the commerce of London had vanished, and most of the merchants were left mere wrecks. Those who had been proud men, at whose call there had once appeared an army of servants, were now left mere flotsam and jetsam on the tide of humanity. At the end of twelve months, the great Labour Questions came to the front. The cries of 1902 grew general; and after some delay, a law came in force, giving every town and trade the option of working eight hours a day. The unions were reorganized, and most trades adopted the idea. London again grew busy with the sound of toil, yet thousands starved. Half the City having been destroyed, work went on for five years without intermission." (At this point some old ladies who evidently were satisfied with history up to this date, and who were acquainted with events since that period, leaned back in their chairs and fell fast asleep).

"In 1938, a man was almost flogged to death for having been found in a workshop ten minutes after closing time. At the end of that year the Government fell." (Here the speaker paused, wiped his forehead, and drank some water.) He continued,—"Fellow citizens, these things must startle some of you, they must impress you all—these horrors on horrors head accumulate; yet, friends, the news-

papers of the day recorded these events; but I will resume:

"A new Government was formed in 1941, and lasted two years. At the end of that period, it was found that there was no work for the majority of the people. The inventive genius of man had survived all these changes. During the whole of this time, labour-saving apparatus, high speed machinery, was invented. As much could now be provided in a few hours as could be made in 1870 in a month. The eight hours compulsory legislation came into force in 1943. Its effects were varied, but no really good result could be claimed for the measure. The hours of labour were few enough, but the work was wanting. No law was sufficiently powerful to satisfy the wants of the people. None really knew what they required. The books, the pamphlets, the newspapers, of the day prove it. A dark cloud was always hanging over the country, and this none of the various forms of Government that were tried could dispel. Fourteen times, in twenty years, Governments changed. Fourteen times presidents were elected, only to be replaced by others, every occasion causing the burning and devestating of the town.

"In 1945, two words were expunged from the dictionary by Act of Convention. They were "masses" and "classes." Women, about that same time, attempted to erase from the language another word, it was "sex." I am wrong, they had

thought to do it fifty years before. They now appeared in public in male attire, but this led to such excesses that it was stopped by Convention. However, to give the history of the next ten years would be mere repetition.

"Revolution succeeded Revolution; the population still continued to decrease; in fact, the evils of the past were but re-enacted. Friends, I have done. May the past prove a lasting lesson for the future."

The lecture over, the old ladies, who went to sleep in 1930, awoke somewhere between 1945 and 1970, and stared at everybody as if everybody except themselves had done something wrong.

The lecturer pressed the button marked "down," and in a moment he was on a level with the flooring.

A young man, with short brown hair and heavy moustache, rose from his seat, and walked towards the lecturer. The lightness of his tread, his easy movements, gave an impression of gentility, and, as he faced the audience, the nobility of his character became plainly visible from the well chiselled features.

"Friends," he said, "some of those present here must remember many of the incidents related to night. I, and the other members of the "Young Alliance," do not. We are thankful for this history, and shall treasure it in our memories"; and, turning to the lecturer, he added, "Mr. Bostwell, our thanks."

The lecture was over, and all slowly passed out of

the hall. As the last speaker approached his fellows one of them remarked,—

"Ingleton, what do you think of the lecture?"

He answered with a curious expression on his face,—

"A great deal. Good night," and passed out.

The foregoing is reproduced from the columns of of the "Half Hour" of August the 29th, 1999.

CHAPTER II.

It was the morning after the lecture. The rain had ceased, but the wind, no longer blowing a gale, raced about in a gambolling, rollicking manner, running round the corner of the streets, stopping, and running on again, like a child at play.

James Ingleton resided in Utopia Terrace, hard by the City Hall, where once the Royal Exchange had stood. The houses were of red brick, all alike—two windows on the ground floor, two on the first floor, and all surmounted, or finished off, with a ridge, which made them resemble Dutch mediæval houses, cut short. Every house had one stone step, and a bell fixed some few feet above in the masonry of the doorway.

In the middle of such a row was the house occupied by Ingleton, his mother and sisters.

He was seated in the front room. The apartment was furnished in a comfortable homely fashion, with a table, chairs, a low couch and other articles of furniture, a few shelves on which were books and files of newspapers. He was seated in an armchair, near a stove (from which heat was given by means of an electric current passing through a platinum coil). Ingleton was reading a newspaper. It was the "Half Hour," which, as

its name betokened, appeared every half hour, from 8 o'clock a.m. till 8 o'clock, p.m.

Opposite him, on the couch, lay a little girl. The child was about ten years of age. Her transparent skin, the thin blue lips, the purple edging of the ears, the gentle heaving of the body, and the general restlessness, showed that disease had left its heavy imprint. The sun brightened up the room. As the child opened her eyes, two suns were reflected in their pupils. No gleaming bright eyes, sparkling with youth, here, only these two dull suns. The child was blind! Oh, that in youth, in very childhood, the windows of the soul should be darkened, and that a cold glazed stare should be all that nature had to bestow in place of the glorious gift of vision. Oh, childhood! that thou shouldst be deprived of all thy pleasures, thy innocent joys, thy very life! That to thee the bright sunshine should be as hopeless darkness, and all a lifelong night! Yet do the blind see, they know, they can penetrate the human mind, without beholding the face. All is not darkness; the want of light develops another sense—perception. They do not see, they perceive.

The child was aware of the presence of her brother, for she sat up, and turning her head to where Ingleton was sitting, said, "James, has Nellie been in yet?" How the weak voice trembled with this effort.

"Yes, Katie dear, she will be back in a moment," was the answer.

"I am so tired; so tired, James. I am always tired," she said. Then, as if the effort had been too much, she sank back on the pillows.

Ingleton rose, passed over towards the child, gently smoothed the pillows, and caressing the little head, said, "Don't fret, dear, you will soon be strong again."

A young lady entered the room on tip-toe, and approached the couch. She was very like her brother; her sparkling blue eyes, and rose-tinged cheeks, were but a feminine replica of James Ingleton, except that the colour of her hair was golden.

Motioning him to move, she stepped close to the couch, and for a few seconds looked intently at the child, who was already in the land of dreams.

She moved and took a chair near her brother, who was already seated.

"Well, Nell, how did you like the lecture?" said Ingleton in a low tone.

"Very well indeed," she answered. Then by the way of postscript, "But it was too disjointed, too much jumping from precipice to precipice, or rather from revolution to revolution."

"You see," said Ingleton, "the lecturer gives but outlines, and the sub-committees furnish details. For all this was but the preparatory work for writing a history."

"Oh! indeed," said Nell, "why did he not mention names?"

"Names, my dear, are mere nothings; men are

nothing;" and then with bitterness, "life is nothing."

"Another thing," said Nell, "why so much detail one moment, and plain outlines the next?"

"Listen! history is mostly lies; the facts of to-day are magnified to-morrow, and mimimised the next day."

"I cannot see what that has to do with it," interrupted Nell.

"A great deal. The biographies of men have furnished more facts and given more real details which show the causes that have led to the events which ultimately occurred."

"Well?" said Nell.

"When we read of spontaneous risings we are deceived. Sometimes the merest trifle, an unnecessary detail—people say—calls into life the spark which smoulders for years until it bursts into sudden flame, burning all the fiercer for this very slow combustion."

A lady, on whom Time's hand had left a few wrinkles, and in whose hair the grey intermingled with the brown, came in and sat down beside them.

"Well," she said, having listened to the last part of Ingleton's remarks, "my mother always told me that when she saw bread get dear, we should see some revolutions."

"A detail," remarked Ingleton, "which was worthy of observation, as was proved in France in 1793."

"My mother told me," chimed in Mrs. Ingleton, "that on the sixth of June, in the year 1917, the baker came to the door at eight o'clock in the morning, to her mother—that was my grandmother—and said, 'Ma'am, the bread's ninepence 'er quartern.'"

"How funny," interrupted Nell, looking questioningly at Ingleton. "Did they announce prices in that way? Could not you see for yourself at the store?"

"I believe that is right enough," said Ingleton. "Everybody had a shop then on his own account, you see. Go on, mother, please."

Nell seemed perplexed, but her mother continued:

"'Ma'am,' he said, 'bread's ninepence 'er quartern.' My grandmother was surprised, but took the bread; and the man said, 'The dock is nearly closed, ma'am; a big meeting going to be held to-day. There 'ill be a scrimmage,' and my mother told me there was a riot, something awful; so that's conclusive."

"Mr. Bostwell mentioned that riot," said Nell, "I believe he called it 'the beginning of the end.'"

Ingleton took down from the shelves behind him a large book. It was the file of a newspaper dated 1941.

"Here, Nell," he said, turning the leaves as he spoke, "are some details," and reading from the paper: "'This morning, a question which has exercised the minds of men for fifty years was settled. An eight hours' labour bill was passed throughout the length and breadth of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and all the depen-

dencies. This law is now to be enforced. "Eight hours ye shall work," is now the eleventh commandment. We trust everyone will recognise the great blessing which has been bestowed upon him.'

"So it goes on," said Ingleton, stopping suddenly, "but at the end it says: 'We trust that no one will now be in want, work must be found for all.'"

"You seem to attach great importance to that last line," said Nell laughingly.

"Indeed I do," answered Ingleton, in all seriousness, with brows contracted. "Note," turning the leaves rapidly, "this is the end of the year. Here is a short paragraph: 'Subscriptions will be received on behalf of the boot makers, now out of work.'"

He closed the book and restored it to the shelf.

"Well," said Ingleton, after an interval of silence, "Mr. Bostwell forgot to mention one great fact. At one time, when every man kept his store, there was a large class of men who had refreshment houses, public-houses as they were called."

"Mr. Bostwell mentioned them," interposed his sister.

"Yes, but he did not mention that opposed to these were men—religious fanatics—who cried them down, who denied a man the right of drinking wine, spirits, or malt liquors, who said it was a sin to drink, or touch these stimulants, and who became a power in the land. Through them, it came about that a publican could have his house shut up, his

business taken away, his wife and children left to starve, through the mere whim of a Magistrate. This confiscation of property, without compensation, had great effect afterwards."

"I don't clearly understand it all," said Nell, "things are so different now."

"You should read these," said Ingleton, pointing to the files of the newspapers.

"Yes, I will. History has little attraction for me," said Nell, "it is so dull. I would have read those papers long ago, but they are so large, I was afraid of them."

"My mother told me," said Mrs. Ingleton, "yes, she always told me, that she said to my father, 'Joe,' she said, 'no good can come of it, hounding people out of their homes, because they sell a glass of ale.'"

She sighed, and closed her eyes, as though her thoughts reverted to her past life and her mother's days.

"Extremes never succeed," said Ingleton.

"How about the equalisation of property in 1968?" said Nell.

Ingleton did not answer for a few minutes, but puckered his brows till they met.

"Well," said Nell, "how about that? it seems to upset your argument."

"No," at length answered Ingleton, "I think not. I might speak at some length about it. But let us see — go back to history. In

1960, those who had been landed proprietors had nothing, or next to nothing, for the continuous civil war had left direst results behind it. True, they still held the land in name, but in name only, for their houses had been burnt over their heads; the cost of tillage and harvesting was so great that very few attempted it. Previous governments had advanced money to the landowners to reinstate them somewhat, but the Convention of 1968 took away that land on which its predecessors in power had advanced the money, and so this equalisation was nothing but a farce. The government became the sole proprietor, after depriving the owners of their property. And I don't know if it had a right to do it."

"But isn't it through this very equalisation that we now exist?" said Mrs. Ingleton. "My mother always told me, although I was still very young, that it caused many a row and riot."

"It did not last long," said Nell.

"Not very," said Ingleton, "it was soon upset; in fact, every two years, up to 1975, saw changes—still oftener perhaps—for the British public chose to be dissatisfied with everything. It was one crisis after another."

"One went to bed expecting to see a revolution every morning," said Mrs. Ingleton; and as if she had forgotten something, she pressed her left hand to her forehead, sat musing for a moment, and said, "My mother told me so."

"James, has the present system ever been tried before on the same scale?" said Nell.

"It was always considered to be the dream of visionaries," rejoined Ingleton; "and now that we have it, we may best compare it to the feudal system."

"I have read a little about that," interposed his sister.

"Men were compelled by their masters to work a certain number of hours per day, and to be governed in a manner which closely resembles the present in its"—he paused as if to find a word to express himself—"grandmotherly fashion. They were called tyrants then, now we call them the nation's preservers." He spoke, not as if in answer to his sister's question, but as though musing to himself.

Pursuing this train of thought, he observed, "But still there was a great difference in many ways. To-day we call a certain action tyranny, next year we call it an act of folly, and an age hence we will say it was not so bad as was thought, and that it was justified by the ultimate objects in view."

He opened his eyes to their fullest, and they seemed to penetrate beyond the confines of the room into the hazy future.

"You are thinking aloud, you are musing, and not answering me," said his sister with a puzzled air.

"Am I?"

"Yes, you are."

"I did not know it."

"You are like this very often; it is very strange on your part," said Nell.

"My mother told me," said Mrs. Ingleton, who had been silently listening to this conversation, "that a man once thought aloud, and it cost him his life."

"How was that?" asked Nell.

"I don't clearly remember," said her mother, "but it was during a revolution. A man addressed a crowd, and told them to change the government. Another man, who stood by, was thinking aloud, and said they were rogues—meaning the party on whose behalf the first man was addressing the people. So everybody got angry, and they hanged him on the nearest lamp-post, such as there used to be in those days. My mother told me so."

"Cold comfort, that," said Ingleton, with a smile.

"Ugh," said Nell, shivering at the thought.

"Oh, it was a common thing then," added Mrs. Ingleton; "my mother told me it was quite common, and thought little enough of."

"Perhaps I do think aloud," said Ingleton; "thought has no boundaries. Ideas mingle one with the other. Sometimes I am sleepless. Sleeplessness is full of dreams; a slumber—even actual wakefulness—has its dreams. Dreams are but thoughts, wrought in the imagery of the mind, becoming visible to the veiled eye."

A sharp ring at the bell was heard, and a short

stout gentleman, with cheeks as red as winter apples, entered; and as Nell led him into the room, he lifted his hat, when half a dozen snow white hairs became visible. These did not lay on his head, but stood up, as if to menace any other hairs that were likely to come within view.

"Fine morning, Mrs. Ingleton," he said.

"Yes, rather brisk," was the rejoinder.

"How is our little patient?"

"Restless, doctor."

He walked to the couch, lifted the tiny hand, and said, "Feverish; nothing very bad, but feverish."

"Dr. Shindle," said Nell, "do you think she will ever regain her health."

"Ah! Miss Ingleton, it is difficult to tell, very difficult; but we have hopes, we live in hope," rejoined the doctor.

"She seems to grow weaker day by day," said Ingleton.

"Fever! my dear sir, fever! that's all, nothing scientific or new, nothing special."

The doctor had a habit of repeating his ideas, and had a predeliction for cases which would give him a theme to write to the College of Physicians about.

"I'll send her a tonic," he said after some deliberation; "strengthening measures, that's what we want."

He evidently did not require the strengthening measures, but like most doctors, he included himself in mentioning his patients.

"I thought you would try your new electrical apparatus, which I have heard mentioned," remarked Ingleton.

"I will, but not now. I shall as soon as she (he looked hard, yet sympathetically at the little sufferer,) is a little stronger."

"Thank you, doctor."

"It is nothing, my friend; I would do more if I could. Illness cannot be cured in a day; you cannot cure it in a week either, but—washing his hands with imaginary soap—"we will have a good try."

He again approached the child, and felt her pulse, and muttered, "Fever—fever."

"What did you remark?" said Mrs. Ingleton.

"Nothing, ma'am, only fever; nothing, that is, principally fever, and we must not stop it; it must run its course." He put his hat on tightly, as if to remind those few menacing hairs that he was master, bade them good morning, and went out.

"I shall order some dinner," said Nell, turning to her mother, who was about to leave the room.

"Consult James," said the old lady, as she softly closed the door.

"Anything you like," said Ingleton, who had sat down, and was reading his newspaper, a fresh number of which had just arrived.

Nell crossed the room, looked sorrowfully at the child, and then, with deep concern, at her brother.

When he was left alone he looked for a time at

the newspaper, then threw it aside. Half closing his eyes, he seemed lost in thought, deep in the unravelling of a problem which seemed too difficult to solve. Perplexity was written on his brow, and the movement of the index-finger in the air showed he was tracing something in his mind. He was aroused from his brown study by the voice of his little sister.

"Is that you, James?" she asked.

"Yes, dear."

"I have been asleep. I have seen so many things, but now all is dark again."

"You have dreamed, Katie," said Ingleton.

"I saw men and women, but all seemed to rush past me; everything went quickly. I saw a great heap of something, it was heaving up and down, and on it was a man. I heard someone say he's dead. James, what does that mean?"

"Dead means that the spirit has fled; that we no longer breathe, speak (he was going to say, see, but stopped himself, and added), hear."

"I do not understand it all," said the child. "I thought that was sleep."

"No, you cannot understand;" and walking to the further end of the room, he muttered, as if speaking to someone else, "Death! thou art incomprehensible."

He walked back to the couch.

"And that great heaving?" asked the child.

"Did it sound like this?" said Ingleton, placing a cup to her ear.

"Yes, it did."

"Then it was the sea."

"The sea you have read to me about?"

"Yes."

"Did the sea make that man dead?"

"Remember, dear, you have only dreamed."

"No, I saw it; I am sure of it."

"The fever," muttered Ingleton, pacing the room. "The fever and the sea are one. Both devour, slay, and kill. Cruel fever! remorseless sea!"

As he returned to the couch a hectic flush o'erspread the child's face, and as she sank back on to the pillows she murmured, "I saw . . ."

Ingleton administered a draught, and still moodily paced the room. "Strange," he muttered, "that the clear noonday should be as night, and the night as noonday. Strange that this child, which has never seen the sea, can imagine it. Imagination, what art thou? as the poets sung of the shadow. Art thou part of our dual existence, or art thou the remnant of a former life, returning to us in our dreams?"

As he again passed the child he saw that she was fast asleep.

He stepped close to the window, glanced upward, and said, "Thou knowest all."

CHAPTER III.

At the date of writing London was built on the square. Now, when you stood in Concord Square, on the side where the Hall of Antiquity was, and turned to the left, or the right, you had a vista of endless streets, crossing and recrossing in a rectangular form very wearying to the eye.

On this occasion we will turn to the left, down Concord Avenue into the Parade. Here again was a fountain, statues and allegorical sculptures. Crossing the Parade, on the opposite side stood the "Young Alliance Club." It was built in the Corinthian style. Passing through the columns, up the flight of steps, and entering the building, on the left was the gymnasium, on the right the library, and further up the corridor, on both sides, were elevators. On the first floor was the smoking-room.

In this room were a few tables, benches, and chairs. The arc-lamps, let in through the ceiling, diffuse a subdued light through the apartment.

On a bench reclined a young man, his elbow on a table, on which he rested his head. In appearance, he was not prepossessing; he certainly could have claimed membership of the Ugly Club which existed in the eighteenth century. His nose was flattened

as if he had pressed it against a pane of glass, and it had remained in that position ever since. To say that his face was wrinkled, would not give the slightest idea of its peculiarities. A mass of wrinkles it was, hundreds of them, that drew the ears inwards; and the two little eyes stared with a dull stony glare, as if they peered at everything through a haze. Every now and then he put a pipe to his mouth, blew out a thin wreath of smoke, then shut his mouth with a snap, and ejaculated, "Hurrah for Merry England."

On chairs, some distance away, sat three more young men. The first of these would not have called for any particular attention, but that his jovial face showed he was a fellow bent upon enjoying himself wherever he might be. His two companions, who sat opposite him, were almost hidden behind the thick clouds of tobacco smoke.

A battle of smoke was raging. He of the jovial face, was administering heavy puffs to his companions, as if he intended to reduce them to the condition of bacon; while they, taking advantage of his hearty laughter, which almost caused him to roll from his chair, answered with a dual puff, which nearly chocked him. This continued until the three worthies were obliged to stop for want of ammunition, for they had exhausted all the tobacco in their pipes.

"Well," said the jolly faced party, knocking the ashes out of his pipe, "I think it's enough, Glimson."

The one who answered to this name, and who was very thin, tall, and beetle-browed, answered,—

"Yes, Bligow, but you've given in."

Bligow immediately took out his pouch, as if to continue the battle, when the third, a young man of medium stature, with an everlasting smile, bordering on a sneer, said, in a somewhat purring voice,—

"No, I think Bligow has won; anyhow I have had enough."

Bligow, feeling that honour had been satisfied, dropped his pouch, stared at his friends, set up a hearty laughter, which again nearly caused him to roll from his chair; but he was restored to his equilibrium by the young man on the couch shouting, "Hurrah for Merry England."

"Ante is back in the days of Robin Hood," said Stocking with a sneer, as he glanced at the former, whose name, Antony, was familiarly cut down by half.

"Yes," said Glimson, of all the history he ever learnt, this cry alone left any impression on him."

Glimson was great in history, and only required a date to start him.

The three worthies filled their pipes, and smoked for a few minutes in silence.

"Glimson," said Stocking, with another sneer, which instantly reformed into his coventional smile, "you are to assist in the preparation of our history, in company with Ingleton and the seniors."

At the sound of the word "Ingleton," Antony pricked up his ears, gazed round the room with his hazy look, but, hearing no immediate sequence to it, reassumed his old attitude.

"Yes," now answered Glimson, with animation.

"I am sick of it all," said Bligow.

"Of what?" asked Stocking.

"Everything," was the laconic reply.

"Everything may be anything, or nothing in particular," rejoined Stocking.

"It's a mistake," said Bligow, with a long pull at his pipe.

"What is?" queried Stocking.

"Everything," was the answer.

"Well, I must say, you are explicit," said Glimson.

"I don't care this much," said Bligow, snapping his fingers.

"For what don't you care?" queried Glimson.

"Bligow has the blues to night, so let us leave him alone," said Stocking.

"Look here," said Bligow, taking his pipe from his mouth, and pointing to nothing in particular, "things are unsatisfactory. I have done no work this twelve-month, and there's no prospect of doing anything for another year. There are hundreds in a similar condition. Of course, I can still study, but I ask you"—he banged his fist on the table—"what for? What am I to be? Is there room for me or anyone else? A glut everywhere, and in everything."

"A nineteenth century cry—'What to do with our boys,'" interposed Glimson.

"Nineteenth or twentieth century, it is all the same," rejoined Bligow; "we are no nearer Arcadia or Utopia now than then."

"But you have nothing to trouble you. You eat, you drink, and your credit card is not exhausted,—at least, I hope not," said the smiling Stocking.

"No, it's not, but there it ends. I eat, drink, and sleep per contract, per chapter, convention, and date. I think, or rather I am supposed to think, to exist, to regulate myself, my very habits and my actions, all on the same stereotyped conditions. Therefore I'm sick of it," said Bligow all in a breath.

"You have hit the target somewhere," said Stocking.

"There is something—I know not what, I cannot express it, but I feel it. Look at this badge (Bligow pointed to the letters Y.A. on his coat), expressionless like my thoughts."

"A mark of disgrace once; not these letters, of course, but the wearing of a badge. Jews were compelled to wear one, convicts did too," said the historical Glimson.

"It's not that, but,"—here Bligow gave another long pull at his pipe—'tis the eternal sameness. I believe if the Convention had the power, they would have turned us out all one size."

"You have got 'em on to night, my friend," said

Stocking; "but"—his teeth became visible from edge to gum, in the immensity of his smile—"I fancy you are correct. I will go so far as to say, I have often thought so to."

Urged on, Bligow launched forth anew: "Everyone," he said—his face becoming contracted, in the serious expression which so ill became it—"has the same income. So much shalt thou have, and no more. Do nothing, do something, it's all the same. Very nice, no doubt, for those who are idly inclined; but what encouragement to incite one to progress, to become, say, a doctor, or a steeple-jack? Nothing!—you might as well become a store clerk, and take it easy." He pulled at his pipe again. "In what branch, I ask you, have we made any great progress? People talk of doing one's duty, one's level best for humanity. Well, for five and twenty years the present social system has existed. During all this period, we have not seen one painting that has made the world marvel at the artist's genius, or a book that has called forth universal admiration, as did the works of Dickens, Thackeray, Hugh, Cuthbert Bede, and a host of others."

The voice of Antony shrieked out, "Hurrah for Merry England."

Not heeding the interruption, Bligow continued,—

"A sameness, an everlasting sameness! No machinery has been invented (and surely there is yet scope,) that has been the means of creating new industries, of promoting any change for the better

over former methods. All the inventive faculty of the brain, all that can elevate a person by his individual gifts above the common multitude, has been stunted, and why? Because no results are assured to the searcher, the thinker, or the inventor."

"Bligow, you have spoken of twenty five years, almost in a breath," said Glimson.

"He has scored a point," said Stocking.

Glimson demurred; and swinging his long arms as though his thoughts emanated from them, said, "A good many years ago the present Social State was founded. Affairs had, by then, come to such a pass that people were very glad to accept the new order of things."

"Of course they were," said Stocking; "why shouldn't they? A third of them had grown old in strife and civil war; others had nothing to do, and no organization; and the rest were too young to have a voice in the matter."

"I know, I know," said Bligow, with some impatience. "The duffers, 'tis true, they were paid wages for work which they would have found necessary to do under any circumstances; those that did nothing received their allowance, naturally, without a murmur."

"You seem put out about it," said Glimson, very slowly; "you have no cause to grumble. You have a credit card; you get twenty-four numbers of the *Half Hour* per day; you have your club, the use of

the common kitchen, good light, and music laid on with the water. You are ridiculous, my friend."

"But is there not something beyond all this—something I cannot define, but of which I have a vague idea?"

"What do you mean?" said Glimson.

"We are an army. 'Work,' cries the sergeant, and we work; 'Stop,' cries the sergeant, and we stop. We are still in the probationary class. To-morrow men may be required for a certain trade. 'March and join the trade,' says our officer, and we must join it. Now, in all ages, armies existed for defensive and offensive purposes. Large rewards were promised, medals which were highly prized were given. Yet but a few joined the ranks. Why was it? Answer that and you have solved my ideas for me," said Bligow.

No one answered that question, and he who had never been known to speak at such length, and so seriously, refilled his pipe, and blew many clouds from his lips, watching them one by one disappear into space. This perturbation of spirits slowly disappeared. As the clouds grew thinner the cheerful look and merry twinkle in his eye returned.

"Ingleton has not been here," said Bligow.

Once more, at the mention of this name, a momentary sneer spread over the face of Stocking, and Antony pricked up his ears and sat bolt upright, staring in front of him.

"No," said Glimson, "his little sister is worse."

"My great regret is that I have not had the opportunity of paying her a visit," said Stocking in his suave manner.

"By-the-by, have we not to choose two members as delegates to the Convention," said Bligow.

"I believe we have," rejoined Stocking. "Supposing we appoint, or rather propose, Boldinch and Thurmson. I do not think we could have better representatives."

The names of these two worthies so tickled the fancy of Bligow that he gave vent to his feelings by bursting out laughing.

"I thought I should see you smile," said Stocking.

"Two delegates shall be appointed by the Young Alliance, as their representatives at the Convention, which shall be held in each year, at such time and place as shall be found necessary. The delegates shall assist at all its meetings, and at any other conference that may be deemed necessary for the welfare of the nation. Year 2, 1977, Chapter IV."

"Year 2, second meeting of Convention, 1977." Glimson uttered this in a very deliberate manner, as if weighing every word.

"The Levellers," exclaimed Bligow.

The conversation would again have taken a serious turn, but for the appearance of a young man, Jerrold Trevors by name. He sported the most diminutive, thinnest specimen of a moustache, which he was in the habit of continually pulling, in order

no doubt to assist its growth. In one hand he held a box, on which was the word "Chessmen," and in the other a chess-board.

He placed the two on the table, and walking up to Antony, said,—

"Hallo, old fellow, how is England to-night?"

CHAPTER IV.

It was a beautiful morning in September. One of those mild yet bracing days, fragrant with the breath of autumn flowers, but with that pleasant crispness in the air, that bluish haze, softly mantling the hills and lingering in the valleys by which the fall of the year is usually heralded in this climate. On such mornings as these, in the sweet, faint flavour of broom and heather, the dying summer, with fragrant breath, wafts us a last farewell; while the filmy mists, first harbingers of coming change—the briskness in the atmosphere, the reddening leaf—all warn us to gather up our strength in order to meet the advent of a stern and boisterous visitor.

Ingleton sat in his room, in his hand lay an open book. Yet it could hardly be said that he was much engrossed in its contents. For ever and anon his eyes would wander from its pages to the windows, and at length he suddenly sprang to his feet and cast the volume aside. In truth, though studious to a degree at night, and when days were dark and dreary, he was a true child of nature; and when he beheld her in such a smiling mood as this, when the—in London — unwonted sight of azure skies and brilliant sunshine met his gaze, the allurements were too much for him, and invariably

he had to yield, and saunter forth to have his fill of balmy air and golden sunlight. He was soon dressed, and left the house. "Only a quarter past ten," he remarked, looking at his watch. "Just time to stroll to the Park and be back for luncheon at the Cretonian," and descending the steps he walked with firm but elastic pace, humming the tuneful *barcarolle* from the "Diver."

But despite the glorious morning and the brightness of everything around him, Ingleton had not proceeded very far before the buoyant spirits with which he had started were beginning to droop, until they were well nigh down to zero. And all this, despite his firmest resolves to get the better of this fit of the blues that was unaccountably stealing over him.

The truth was, ever since the night of Mr. Bostwell's lecture, Ingleton's mind had been filled with vague but persistent forebodings of coming trouble. Although well acquainted with the facts, for history had great attraction for him, the lecturer's description of life towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, filled as it was with grim pictures of selfish greed, and grinding poverty, had left a vivid impression on Ingleton's memory. But it had done more. It had loosened a web of ideas that had long laid coiled up in his mind, and it had set him thinking.

Do what he might, to live only for the present, his brain ever harked back to one engrossing subject. He would ponder and ponder, asking himself,

what would be the end of it all? When the present system of the State for all, and no one for himself, should have succeeded in destroying the last remaining germs of individuality of action, of thought, of impulse in the nation; when man's natural resistance to the soul-killing, dead-levelling tyranny of this grandmotherly government could go no farther; he feared, aye, he felt certain, that then the time would not be far distant when the nation would once more awaken to find itself plunged into an abyss of gloom, of prosy monotony, to which even the horrors of civil strife, that made the waning days of the former century hideous, would be as nought in comparison.

Thus musing, Ingleton had walked on some distance, when suddenly his thoughts were recalled to the present by the shrill scream of a child. Quickly on the alert, he turned his head in the direction whence the sound came.

At the entrance of the Park gates a child lay on its face. Not ten paces from it was a transport coming towards it. Ever quick of action, Ingleton ran back, just as the car was within an inch of the child. With a firm grasp he dragged it from the metals. The transport had been brought to a standstill. With the child still in his arms, Ingleton hastily stepped back to the pavement. The whole scene lasted but a moment.

"Oh, auntie, auntie," cried the child. It was a little girl, her loose streaming bright brown curls

covered with dust, and her pretty dress all crumpled and torn. "Oh, auntie, auntie," cried the child again, as a young lady came up and took the child from Ingleton.

As he glanced, furtively enough, at the graceful form of the young girl, who was doing her utmost to pacify the sobbing child, he inwardly confessed that never had he met with a lovelier being than the lady whom he now knew to be the little girl's auntie.

"Oh, auntie," sobbed the child.

Ingleton turned to her, and saw she had a bruise on her head. Then his gaze met the beautiful dark eyes of the charming unknown, and the look of mingled fear and pleasure which greeted him, he remembered for many a day.

"How kind of you, sir. I did not notice that Georgie had left my side," said she in a voice low and musical, the unmistakable tones of a strong, yet womanly and gentle nature.

"I heard her cry," said Ingleton. "But talking is of little use; the child is bruised, and shaken with fear, besides I think I have injured her in picking her up."

"Very slightly," was the answer. "I am indeed most thankful for your timely assistance."

"Well, I will carry her home for you, she is too much shaken to walk."

"Georgie," said the young lady, "the kind man says you had better come home."

The child answered with a mute, appealing glance.

"I will carry her," said Ingleton, and he lifted the child into his arms.

Sobbing all the way, she allowed herself to be carried by the stranger.

The lady, hitherto known as auntie, introduced herself to Ingleton as Blanche Collingwood, residing at 54, Liberation Square, and the child as Georgina Berthon. To this place Ingleton wended his way, the child on his arms, musing, as he walked, on the strange circumstances which had brought him and this lady together, and on the unlooked for termination of this morning's stroll.

Arrived at the house, he handed the child over to her aunt, promising to call the following day to enquire after his young charge's welfare.

Miss Collingwood begged him to enter. He declined, saying he "had something important to do that morning."

Walking home, he mused over the latest occurences.

The day following her niece's mishap near the park, Blanche Collingwood was seated in her sitting room, engaged, or ostensibly so, in her favourite occupation, that of lace making, an art in which she was a rare adept. But this morning at least, her heart was not in her work, for again and again her eyes wandered aimlessly from the mass of delicate gossamer in her hand, now to the little marble

group, representing Daphnis and Chloe, then to the well furnished book-case, and to various objects that filled this little room, over which there was diffused, as it were, an indefinite charm, a grace vague, yet ever present, as though the sweet being who owned this snug domain had breathed upon it the spirit of her fascinating loveliness.

As if moved by a sudden impulse, she rose, and with quick movement drew towards her an old harp, of which the old-fashioned carving was worn, and the gilt faded. A preliminary canter of deft, light fingers over the strings, a medley of tuneful vibrations, and then she gave full rein to her splendid contralto; and with a brilliant series of trills and roulades, clear, metallic vibrating in the upper register, deep, rich, sonorous in the lower, she went through the scena *Bel mia fortuna* with a wealth of dramatic fervour that even Madame Peroni would not scorn. But it was evident that Mazzanti's florid strains were not the music that harmonized with her present mood, and with a sigh of something of relief, she struck the cords and played the opening bars of Siebel's song in "Faust." The deep pathos of this ever bright gem from the master hand of a composer, whose prolific genius had done much to illumine the darkening gloom of the nineteenth century's death throes, appeared to respond to a hidden chord in her inmost soul. For while her rendering of *Bel mia fortuna* had been clear, brilliant, penetrating in its power, now the soft

cadenzas flowed onward, smoothly intermingling with other, melting as it were each in its own softened beauty, the exquisite mellowness of the rich young voice reaching its climax in the simple, but all-expressive termination, *O Margharita*.

The song was sung. Blanche did not move from the seat at the harp; she turned her head towards the window, and appeared to fix her pensive gaze upon the street outside; and in her eye there suddenly came a tearful dimness—a not unfrequent occurrence of late.

Startled out of her reverie, she almost sprang to her feet, when, with a premonitory ring of the electric turning box, a small card fell through the aperture on the panelling, on to the receiver. Quickly picking it up, she glanced at it, and on her features came a strangely wistful expression as she read, "James Ingleton," and recognized the name as that of the young man she had met under such very unconventional circumstances in the park the other morning.

Walking towards the door, she opened it and saw Ingleton standing in the passage.

"Mr. Ingleton, I am very pleased you have called," she said. "Step into my sanctum."

He approached, and taking her proffered hand, bowed deferentially, as he gave her the morning's greeting.

She led him into the room, and placed an armchair for him.

"How is the little patient?" he asked.

"She is out at present. It was only the fright; that was all," she replied.

He sat down, and she quickly caught his look of surprise as his eyes rested upon the harp—a thing he had not met with for many a day in a private dwelling-house.

"You are fond of music, I presume," she remarked, leaning back in her armchair, facing Ingleton.

"Indeed I am," he answered; "without it, life would—to me at least—be devoid of all sunshine. Music I have found, when truly appreciated, to be man's most constant friend. With him, it smiles in his joys, weeps in his sorrows, buoys him in his hopes, and is ever ready to lift him out of himself to higher things. But I confess, Miss Collingwood, it is not alone my love of music that makes me feel glad to see such a beautiful instrument grace your charming room."

"Indeed! what is the other reason then, pray?"

"Well, Miss Collingwood," he resumed, and as he spoke, his clear blue eyes began to kindle with enthusiasm, "if you do not think it presumptuous, in one who is still all but a stranger to you, to say as much, I repeat I feel exceedingly glad that I find my first impression of you to be correct, when the other morning I first met you near the park. In the few moments I stood before you, I yet had time to see, or rather to feel intuitively that yours was not an every-day nature. And now I rejoice to find how correctly

I judged you. For in the presence of that harp I cannot help seeing a bold yet womanly assertion of your individuality—a protest, all the more powerful that it comes from one so charming—against a dictatorial administration that supplies us with our music by means of underground tubes and pipes, together with our light and our water, grinding down all individual taste to one common level, as if, forsooth, we were all children, idiots or weaklings, whose whims and fancies it were dangerous to indulge."

As he spoke, she had been watching the varied expressions on his face with growing attention, and at his concluding words a tremor of emotion shook her frame.

"'Tis strange, Mr. Ingleton," she replied, after a few minutes' silence, her mobile features flushing with animation, the beautiful eyes aglow with enthusiasm — "'tis strange, indeed, that your thoughts and mine should be so in harmony. For such ideas as you have just so well explained, I, too, have long held. But until now I feared I was but a mere malcontent, a dreamer of dreams, as none of my own sex with whom I came into contact appeared to share my views; and as for men, I have so very few acquaintances among them that I have had but little opportunity to converse with them about such things. The harp is an heirloom in my family, a memory of other days, when all was otherwise. Often, as I run my fingers over the strings, I think of

those who, in castle and mansion, drew sweet inspiration from its melodious sounds, or found rest in their tuneful echoes."

"I am more than surprised to hear it," said Ingleton, who, despite his earnest thoughtful nature, could generally turn a neat phrase when he wished: "the men little guess what a chance they have lost in not cultivating your acquaintance."

"Thanks for the compliment," she answered; and there was a tinge of bitterness in her voice, "but I have small reason to wish to extend my circle of male acquaintances." Then noticing the look of something like dismay that passed over Ingleton's features, adding with nervous confused eagerness: "Pardon me, I did not mean to be rude. Of course I was speaking in a general sense. You must grant me your indulgence; for bitter memories will sometimes carry us back so far into the past, that we are wont to forget the present."

Her sad tender tones had not escaped Ingleton, although he was too well bred to express his surprise; but inwardly he wondered greatly, that so bright, so fair a girl, could have bitter memories at all. Deftly he turned the subject.

"That is very beautiful lace, Miss Collingwood," he resumed, his eyes fixed on the dainty meshes spread out on the little round table, on which Blanche had thrown her work on his entrance. "I much admire your skill and taste."

"Oh! what is the use of it? Why have skill or

taste?" she replied, with a listless droop of the head.

"But, Miss Collingwood," he quickly replied, "surely it is something to cherish, if one has a true sense of the beautiful, and the skill to develop one's tastes."

"Again I say, Mr Ingleton," she continued—and with growing warmth, her listlessness of before quite gone—"and if one has all this, what is the use it? Take my individual case, for instance. I am still a minor, and for the next two or three years I may be called upon at any moment to take my place in the industrial army, perchance to stand at the wash tub all day long, or to sweep the floor at the National Laundry. 'A good school, eh,' Mr. Ingleton, in which to develop one's taste for the beautiful."

"And what about us men then," Ingleton replied, with bitterness,—"what matters it to our jog-trot Government? Be his mind never so much absorbed with the highest aspirations, he must be ready to answer the call of duty, even though it bade him take his place amid the cleansers of the city sewers. You see, Miss Collingwood, the dream has at last been realised. You take your place at the wash-tub. I join the gangs of the scavengers. There you have it—perfect equality of the sexes! Do you not marvel at the genius of our administrators? Why, here's a problem that has vexed the souls of every would be reformer in the nineteenth century; and heigh

presto! our ædiles have solved it in the twinkling of an eye? And to think of the ingratitude of human nature! Why you are actually not yet satisfied! Sad, very sad!"

"Yes, it is sad," she resumed, and the tone of her voice sounded certainly in harmony with her words—"sad, that so much valuable energy is being daily wasted in the attempt to disindividualize—if I may use such a word—the nation."

Ingleton appeared suddenly fired with an uncontrollable enthusiasm. That concluding phrase had touched on all too responsive chords; and with flushed cheek, and kindling eyes, he rose from his seat with a quick vigorous movement.

"Miss Collingwood," he said, in a voice vibrating with suppressed energy—"Miss Collingwood, you, I, many of us, have been saddened long enough—aye, maybe ever since we arrived at years of understanding. We shall be saddened not *much* longer. For we are convinced that it is as hopeless as it is absurd—aye, and wicked—to attempt to crush the inviduality out of an enlightened people. Believe me," he continued, with ever rising enthusiasm, "believe me, the day is not far distant that shall see the sun of individualism once more rise over this land, with its quickening rays, to call back into life, from its dull lethargic slumbers, that spark of the 'sacred fire'—individual genius—which is the most God-like of the gifts bestowed upon man. It is a gift divine that, if it is to blossom forth and bear

golden, glorious fruit, must be watered by the sweat of human labour, ripened by the sun of the immortal individuality of man."

Again he sat down, and still flushed with excitement he glanced half admiringly, half questioning, at his fair *vis-a-vis*.

There was silence for a moment, she broke it, and with her eloquent eyes fixed full upon him, she replied in a voice that sounded sweet and sincere—"God speed that day, Mr. Ingleton."

Ingleton was about to speak again when the door opened and a lady, of that not too sweet age, which is known as "uncertain," entered.

Hers was not exactly a charming personality, but it was rather a striking one. Of a stature exceeding that of most women, she appeared muscular and powerfully built. In fact, her appearance, as far as her figure was concerned, was decidely masculine. But the contour of her face altogether upset that impression. The complexion was fair and rosy, the features delicate and refined, and the mass of wavy ringlets that peered out from beneath the tasteful little cap of lace and blue ribbon, held the face as in a flaxen yellow framework, streaked here and there with tell-tale threads of silver. But bestow one glance upon those black-browed eyes, and the impression of delicacy and womanliness is dispelled. Piercing in their cold brilliancy, shadowed by overhanging inky bushes of eyebrows, twinking and restless: they are the eyes that betoken a nature

outwardly calm and placid, but selfish to an extreme, fierce and relentless when roused.

Such was Mrs. Berthon, the lady who had ever since the fateful day, now some years ago, when her father mysteriously disappeared, given Blanche Collingwood the shelter of her home in Liberation Square.

Here Blanche lived in ease and comfort; the spiriting away of her father being apparently the only occurrence, the memory of which often ruffled the placidity of her present life. Her mother she did not even recollect, for she was all but an infant at the day of her death. So to all intents Miss Blanche Collingwood was now an orphan, under the protection of Mrs. Berthon.

Truth to say that lady, who could be amiable enough—in a superficial way—when she chose, missed no opportunity to show kindness to her niece, or to minister to her comforts, so that Blanche valued her friendship, and made her her confidante in all things, her generous, impulsive nature, scorning to suspect any ulterior motive lurking under such gentle mien and behind such constant kindness.

"My aunt, Mrs. Berthon," said Blanche. Then addressing Mrs. Berthon—"This is Mr. Ingleton, who so gallantly saved Georgie yesterday."

"Oh! to be sure, yes," remarked Mrs. Berthon, eyeing Ingleton the while searchingly with her sharp orbs. "To be sure," she continued, taking a chair.

"I am very pleased to make the acquaintance of such a *preux chevalier* as yourself, Mr. Ingleton. Georgie is in rapture about 'the nice man' who rescued her. The child is out just now, or I would let her come and see you. But you will call again soon, to be sure, when she is at home."

Ingleton said a few courteous words. But to him it seemed as though there was something too sweet and coaxing in that voice, as though its purring tones were scarcely in harmony with the glitter of those heavily browed eyes. But accustomed as he was, at all times, to subdue and conceal his feelings, he soon resumed the conversation, this time on the most common-place topics, and with a studied politeness, that denoted that neither his mind, nor his heart, were in the words he uttered. The charm that had given life and soul to his utterances, whilst he had been alone with Blanche, was gone, now that the spell had been broken by the entrance of a third person, and after a brief interchange of social platitudes, he felt almost relieved to think, that the forms of politeness no longer bade him prolong his visit.

He rose, took leave of Blanche and her aunt, left the house, and was soon again under the glass roof of the city.

His pace was slower than usual, for he was in deep thought. "Strange," he mused, "strange that continually the image of that girl should come between me and my thoughts. 'Tis not of my

seeking. The time that is approaching, may be, slowly—I am not so sure of that even, but anyhow, surely—will be for me at least a time for action, not for vapid dreams. I must nerve myself for the struggle that must come,"—his mouth grew set and firm, his eyes fixed, as he mused on,—"I must concentrate and gather together all the force that is within me. I must *think* . . . . *think*, so that ere long, I may *act* . . . . I *cannot*, I *will* not brook an alien thought to lure me into any byways, from the straight path that I have chosen to tread."

Suddenly his lips relaxed, his head drooped lower, and he appeared to hesitate. "But," he resumed, falteringly, "is this an alien thought? Should not the influence of so sweet a girl rather spur me on in the task I have set myself. Should not her encouragement inspire me with an ardour ever more intense? Ah! yes! it will, it shall." Again his lips resumed a firm, set line. "Old, forgotten, despised days of chivalry, return, hasten back to earth once more! Nerve my arm with strength, fill my heart with true devotion, and may my prowess yet be a factor in the struggle that must, that shall, end in restoring to this land the greatness that has been crushed out of it—that grandeur and might which it is in the power alone of individual genius, free and untrammelled, to bestow upon a nation. Heaven grant my prayer!"

CHAPTER V.

"Is she any better?"

"Very little indeed."

"Fever, I suppose."

"Yes, the doctor says so."

The speakers were James Ingleton and a lady of uncertain age, but of a very decided rotundity of form, and who, not being satisfied with an ordinary complement of features, possessed a double chin. On her upper lip was a slight down (which her enemies termed bristles). Her eyes were of a hard steel grey, and she was continuously shifting on her chair. Thus runs the pen portrait of Miss Janette Smithers, old maid, and aunt of James Ingleton on the maternal side.

"Fever," she said, "that's the latest rage; every disease is fever, every complaint you have, fever, faugh! I have no belief in them or in their ways."

"But, aunt, the doctors have studied these matters, surely they know."

"No, they go according to the fashion, they cure by fashion. When the doctor was the barber, and the barber was the doctor, he had a sign at his house, it was a brass chalice to receive the blood. 'Has he the fever,' said he, 'bleed him.' When the doctor became a doctor, and a

doctor only, he despised his ancestor, the barber, and called him charlatan, empiric, and a host of other names. He mineralised you, so-and-so, of gold or silver, steel or iron; everybody was cured by minerals"—she paused for breath—"or killed. Then we returned again to nature's remedies—herbs; and the mineral doctors were the quacks. Then we had air and water, water and air. Drink nauseous water and breathe pure air; that would cure anything. 'Ho! ho!' cried the next generation of doctors—they were scientists, now all wrong—'The air is foul, do not breathe. Food is dangerous, do not eat. The water is unhealthy, do not drink'; and what was the nightmare? Why, microbes and bacteria, that was it; microbes and bacteria in everything—everywhere. 'We will prevent it all,' said the scientists—inoculation, that's the thing. Any disease or illness, no matter how slight, it was the bacteria that did it, and they inoculated for it: On the chest, on the arm, on the back, everywhere in turns. Professor Blank has discovered the bacteria of this or that disease, recorded the papers; to cure it, inoculate. But the people died just the same, that is the strangest part of it. Then came the magnetic, electric, galvanic, mesmeric, hypnotic, and other fads, and with each in turn the people were treated, faugh! it's all rubbish. Now it's the fever fashion. Between the the whole lies the cause. No extreme is good."

"Simply the results of the research of science,"

said Ingleton, "research and study discovered all these things."

"Science, faugh! When the priests of old anointed the people with oil, they cured them. Now we require as many complications as there are minutes in an hour. Besides, look at the extremes: some say starve the fever, others feed the fever, both cannot be right."

"Well, aunt, this will not cure Katie."

"No, sorry I am that I cannot; but I do not believe the doctors can. She may grow out of it, and she may——" she shook herself in her chair and stopped.

"James," she said, turning the conversation, "you do not look at all well. You have not been burning the midnight oil, I hope; that is really foolish. If you cannot get through your work in the daytime—do not do it at night, faugh! I hate that sort of thing."

"No, aunt, I have not burnt the midnight oil—the oil has been consuming me."

"You think too much."

"May be I do."

"Well, you ought not to."

"Can one prevent it?"

"Your head is choked full of science, history, and many 'ologies, which will never do you any good. Get rid of them, faugh!"

"But one should know these things."

"Yes, a little learning is dangerous, and too

much equally so. Well, good morning, I cannot stay any longer, wish the little dear better."

Ingleton, left to himself, sat silently for some time, and as was his wont, began thinking aloud: "My aunt said I should not study, and not think so much. How can I prevent it—a thousand thoughts crowd into my brain at once, one effacing the the other, only to return again, and trouble me further. To-day, to-morrow, yesterday, a hundred minor matters mingle with those subjects and thoughts, which it would now be impossible to eradicate from my mind .... The phantasies of the brain are my boon companions. I, in myself, am nothing .... Who is anything? yet each in himself is a separate being, whose actions, thoughts, desires, differ with all else. Each of my thoughts differs in the essential from the other. Naked, meagre, a mere phantom of a morbid mind .... They grow, I clothe them, I enhance them; they become real, my visions become my life, and my life a mere thought .... They grow and crush me, they are beyond me, they are my masters, I their slave. How can I stop thinking? .... Men preached the doctrine of the dual existence. I would fain believe it. Which is good? .... which evil? .... How do I know? how can I tell? .... I live in the past, yet my being is in the present .... The tempest of thought must out. Then comes the calm. Is it the good or evil part of my personality which revels in the past, abhors the present, and idealises

the future? Who can answer? . . . . Nature! thou art not yet solved. In every age came a time when men thought they had reached the point whence they could take a plunge into thy depths, and reveal all thy hidden secrets, thy jealously guarded treasures. Yet none can tell me, whether that which is the prompting spirit of my thoughts is my good or my evil self. My thoughts conjure up man in every epoch, performing on the stage of life, with thought his prompter, conscience his judge and critic. Where is the audience? I exclaim; and in a moment my vision has disappeared, and a thousand different imageries crowd my brain, until I fain would end them all in myself . . . . Is is not enough that the burden of life is mine, without the weight of a huge collection of phantoms. I have created them. I cannot end them . . . . a weariness of spirit and of flesh. . . . . What subject has given me most thought? . . . . History—a constant repetition with a great lesson . . . . Here are our kings, our queens," (he pointed with his hand at space) "our peers, and noblemen. . . . . Here red rabid socialism" (he continued pointing)—"anarchy in all its horrors, fighting pell-mell in a melee, struggling for very existence. . . . How the scenes change, for now the present comes surging upward, with its wearying placidity, and its monotony everlasting . . . . How the brain is troubled—nothing decisive, nothing perfect, thought merging into thought without end."

The fingers twitched, and fell listlessly by his side.

Great beads of perspiration were on his brow. For a moment, the quiet breathing of the child on the couch was the only sound to be heard.

The child just then awoke. Ingleton hearing her moving stepped towards her.

"Have you slept well, Katie?"

"Yes; but I thought I heard some one shouting in my sleep."

"Shouting, dear?"

"Yes; I suppose I dreamt."

Ingleton walked towards the window—"I suppose she heard me in her sleep," he said.

A bell sounded, the turning box opened, and Pelham Stocking, hat in hand, entered the room, and with him, perhaps, a chilling draught, for at the sound of his voice the child shivered.

"I trust I find you somewhat improved in health," he said, approaching the child.

"A little, thank you," Katie replied.

"I am really glad of that," rejoined Stocking; and turning to Ingleton, "I suppose you are in your usual good health."

"Yes, I am; how do you find yourself?"

"So, so," answered Stocking.

"How's that, you look well enough," said Ingleton.

"Too much thought, my dear Ingleton. I have had food for reflection for the last few days."

"What troubles your mind? perhaps I can assist you," queried Ingleton.

"Just what I thought," answered Stocking. "In fact I said so: no man is so clear-headed as Ingleton, and no one could explain or disperse the mist so well as you."

"Thanks, very much, for the eulogy," said Ingleton, with a smile.

Stocking had been watching Ingleton's every movement, and said,—

"The fact is I very seldom think; that is, I seldom have time to do so. But last night, Bligow, the jolliest and best-hearted fellow that ever drew breath, grumbled. In fact, in a manner as serious as possible, more serious than ever *I* thought he could be. He said he was dissatisfied with the social state. What caused this dissatisfaction he could not comprehend. I could not make out, and Glimson, who was present, did not attempt to enlighten us. Therefore, I began thinking, and find I am also up in mind, and if *need be* in arms, against the present condition of things. But not being able to clearly define to myself what I sought, nor even capable of centralising my ideas sufficiently to find the wrong, I have come to you, who understand it so much better than I, to assist me to elucidate the difficulties."

Katie coughed, and Ingleton administered a draught; and turning to Stocking, he said, "Come into my room and we can converse."

He led the way, followed by Stocking, into the adjoining room, which was furnished with a table,

chairs, and a bookcase, well-stocked with works on miscellaneous subjects. On the walls hung a few maps; on a smaller table was a writing desk and a pile of manuscripts. On a shelf were a few more books, whose bindings betokened their age. These were huddled together, as if to prevent time and decay from encroaching upon them. On the larger table were scattered newspapers, pamphlets, and a set of mathematical instruments.

"Take a seat," said Ingleton, motioning Stocking to a chair; and seating himself opposite that worthy, he said, "Now state your grievance."

"I remember reading," answered Stocking, "of an old man who was seen walking, day after day, looking for something; what it was nobody could tell. I am in a similar predicament. The present social status does not suffice. Why not? You can no doubt explain?"

For a moment Ingleton let his lashes droop.

Stocking was watching the effect of his speech with some anxiety.

"I think the cause is not far to seek, yet it requires some explanation, and it would be necessary to revert to the past before I could explain the reason of your discontent with the present," said Ingleton, after an interval.

"I am perfectly willing to listen," rejoined Stocking, "only too glad to learn; but I trust I am not putting you to any inconvenience."

"I will commence," said Ingleton, "as I should,

at the beginning, and travel as rapidly as possible, then you will understand as well as I. In the end of the eighteenth, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the daylight dawned in the minds of men. Steeped in ignorance and bigotry they had long lived lives of darkness. The heavy cloud lifted, and the faint ray of sunlight that flickered in the sky they mistook for Sol himself. That was a fatal error.

"Well, towards the middle of the nineteenth century the world was divided into two great sections, known respectively as the 'classes' and the 'masses.' The classes, perhaps from fear, perhaps from a sense of duty, attempted to elevate these masses—that was the populace. They built schools, compelled the people to educate themselves, taught them to live nobler, better, and unselfish lives; albeit, they did not often lead such themselves. Elevate was the watchword. That was the great point. Now, when some men—philosophers, socialists, communists—call them what you will—had been elevated (partly so, I should say), and drawn forth from their degredation, they, in their stupidity, with their dimness of perception, mistook the semi-obscurity for the very daylight.

"That was their mistake, or may be the outcome of sheer wilfulness. 'Equality!' was their cry. That in all cases meant 'descend.' You may say that elevation would bring them to the same pass, but it would not."

Ingleton had already passed the stage of conversa-

tion, he simply gave utterance to his thoughts, regardless of Stocking.

"For elevation would never extend to all. Why? It would not. As one walks along the streets, men and women pass, who seem to typify the brute creation. There is a face you may liken to a bull-dog, an ape, a cat, or a fox; and often the physiognomy is a pretty safe index to the man. On such people as these booklore is wasted. Knowledge, even if gained, would in the end prove but a tool for evil designs. Would that be elevation? No. The equality preached by these men would cause you, or I, or a thousand others, to descend to their level. In fact, I need not tell you, it *has* done so. Later on both sides came to extremes.

"A party of men and women preached a still higher elevation. Ascend, they said, to a higher sphere; elevate, and the mysteries of nature, the very secrets of God (they recognised not the Deity) would be man's. That was a new idea they thought. It is as old as the hills. Lives of asceticism, hard study, the sacrificing of the body for the sake of the spiritual nature of man, the formula of the monks, the nuns, and the hermit, was their theory, and . . . their mistake.

"Man has a corporate body, which must act on its own behalf and must not be suppressed. That I am right is proved. These prophets of a higher elevation disappeared together with their doctrines. They went to an extreme—too great. Meanwhile

the doctrine of equality was preached, nay, bellowed, into people's ears and pushed down their throats. Yet so indigestible a morsel was this same equality that it took a century to transform the dream into a reality.

"And now for a quarter of a century we have lived in this Utopia, as it is deemed by the Levellers. No better name could have been devised for the party who gave us this present social state. It was for the sake of humanity that they founded this state. But it was individual power that they aimed at, but did not obtain.

"Men were weary of strife, and the most brilliant oratory could not rouse them. Collectivism was the doctrine, and equality of the human race was to be obtained at the cost of individuality. I do not deny that the present social system could not exist till the end of time, that were foolish ; but, it requires one condition to enable it to do so. That is, that all men should be cast in one mould, have one brain, and a singleness of ideas. Given *that*, and the present State can last for ever . . . . . A thousand persons look upon a certain project from a given point of view, and all agree as to its feasibility ; yet those thousand minds, whilst finding a thousand diverse reasons for doing so, would discover a thousand differences in the *minutial*.

"We have reached that stage when we ought to live in Arcadian bliss, when all our wants ought to be satisfied, and our lives unbroken periods of hap-

piness. So thought our ancestors. Have we arrived at that stage? No! certainly not. I, you, Bligow (he had come back to himself), and thousands of us are dissatisfied, finding an insufficiency—in what? In the loss of our personality—of Individualism.

"That word expresses all. We have lost ourselves in the common multitude. That is, we have *almost* lost ourselves, for were we altogether lost we would be satisfied. The world will some day come to an end, we are taught. It is already slipping from us, and the last man will some day not perceive his loneliness, nor the nearness of his end. I think he will; he may not perceive in his early days how near the edge he stands, but when the truth comes home to him, he will fight a bitter fight for existence. . . . So with us. We have not perceived how gradually we have been disappearing, losing ourselves in the great all-engulfing collectivism. But we are discovering it, and inwardly we are fighting for our personality and for Individualism."

When he ceased speaking he was still visibly agitated.

Stocking was watching Ingleton very closely, and drew in to his memory every utterance as though he meant to remember them and treasure them up for the time that was to come.

"You ascribe the want I feel as a yearning for Individualism, if I understand you rightly," said Stocking, laying stress on the "you."

"Yes, it is yourself, your distinct personality drawn

out of the army of labour that you seek," replied Ingleton.

"And you (more emphasis on the *you*) you are of opinion that it cannot last," insinuated Stocking in the blandest possible manner, as if not daring to venture an opinion himself.

"It is impossible for the present to merge into the future," answered Ingleton, warmly.

"How do you make that statement good, my friend?" asked Stocking in a manner as casually as possible.

"I am opposed to it, you are opposed to it, so is Bligow; tens of thousands may be in a similar position; nay, it is but natural that they should be; I am sure they are; it is impossible for us to be contented," answered Ingleton.

"Well, what would *you* do, would *you* oppose it openly?" hazarded Stocking.

"I would rectify it, if I could. Wrong is not right even if it be ever so powerful!" exclaimed Ingleton, the blood mounting to his face in the vehemence of his utterance.

"I would second you; rather, if my humble self would prove of any utility in so great a cause, I would offer it willingly, if you would lead," said Stocking, as though carried away by Ingleton's enthusiasm.

A piercing shriek rent the air, and Ingleton sprang from his seat and hurried into the next room, followed by Stocking, who bit his lips from vexation at this interruption.

The sick child lay with her head on the ground, and her feet on the couch. Restless in her sleep, she had fallen.

Ingleton turned white with fear, but recovering his self possession in the same instant, tenderly lifted the poor little sufferer, and replaced her on the couch.

"Speak, Katie, are you hurt?" stammered Ingleton.

A painful groan and a sob was the answer.

Stocking went to the table, and poured out a draught. "She will be alright in a minute," said he.

Slowly the child recovered, and the sobbing ceased. Stocking raised the glass to her mouth, but the child trembled so that it was with much difficulty he administered the medicine.

Both Ingleton and Stocking took a seat by the couch, and sat silently watching the child. After a time, Stocking, who saw now that it would be impossible, and imprudent to attempt to re-open the interrupted conversation, took his leave.

When he had gone, Ingleton went to the window and looked after him. "I have betrayed myself," he murmured. "He has played Cassius to my Brutus, to some extent. He has led me on, and I have betrayed all that was uttermost in my thoughts. I must be on my guard with that fellow."

CHAPTER VI.

"WHAT is it, I wonder, that could have caused Blanche to be so very pensive lately," remarked Mrs. Berthon, addressing Pelham Stocking, who was comfortably leaning back in an armchair, in the sitting room at No 54, Liberation Square.

"Some woman's whim or other, I suppose," answered Stocking. "Your sex is like the British weather, of an ever varying mood, now pensive, now gay, without more cause for the one than the other."

"You speak like one who knows," replied Mrs. Berthon; and with a cynical smile on her lips, adding, "As of course you should, having made our sex one of your favourite studies."

"I don't know that I have," he said, not regarding the sarcasm that was evident enough in her voice; "but you ladies are, as a rule, of more changeable temperament than we. That is a matter of common observation. And, indeed, 'tis a weakness which constitutes one of the chief charms of your sex, so 'tis not for us to complain of it."

"One thing I have noticed," continued Mrs. Berthon; "it is generally after Antony has been here that she seems to have one of these gloomy attacks come over her."

"Oh! Antony!" ejaculated Stocking, in a tone of sneering disgust, "as if his presence were not enough to give any one a fit of blues. I cannot conceive, Mrs. Berthon, why you allow him the run of the house, as you seem to do."

"Mr. Stocking," answered Mrs. Berthon, with studied deliberation, eyeing him the while with a steady glance from her steely orbs, "Mr. Stocking, notwithstanding what you just now said, about the meaningless, ever changing moods which distinguish my sex, I assure you that on my own part I do nothing, and allow others, if I can help it, to do nothing, for which there is not a substantial motive. And I tell you that I have a motive in allowing Antony to come and go here as he pleases; and I am surprised," she continued, fixing her eyes searchingly upon Stocking, "I am surprised," she continued, "that you do not see that it would be *dangerous* to close this house against Antony."

Stocking winced at her last words, and with drooping head, and a certain trepidation, as though anxious to be done with the subject, he answered, "Yes, I see, I see, you are right."

The sitting-room door opened, and Blanche entered. Observing who were there, a look of annoyance came into her eyes. "I had no idea that you were here, Mr. Stocking," she said, in a tone of languid indifference, which did not appear to detone that her surprise was a very pleasurable one. Then approaching Stocking, who had risen from his

seat, she passively allowed him for a moment to take her hand in his.

Blanche sat down, and a somewhat desultory conversation ensued, which was sustained chiefly by Mrs. Berthon and Stocking, Blanche being for the most part an indifferent listener.

Suddenly the patter of nimble little feet, the sound of childish laughter, was heard approaching the room, and the next moment, in tiny silvery tones, the question was asked, "May I come in, auntie?"

"Yes, my dear," answered Blanche.

The door opened, and little Georgie Berthon, vision of smiles and dimples, tripped lightly into the room, and bounded on to Blanche's lap. Then looking round she beheld Stocking, and her little face fell.

"Oh," she cried, with childish candour, "I thought it was the nice man I saw in the park that was here, not this one," glancing toward Stocking with a pout on her lips.

"She means Mr. Ingleton," explained Blanche to Stocking, in reply to his questioning look.

"Ingleton!" repeated Stocking, with evident annoyance. "Ingleton! what does the child want of him?" Then turning to Blanche, "Do you know James Ingleton?"

"I made his acquaintance a few days since," replied Blanche. "Is he a friend of yours?"

"He—oh, yes, he is," said Stocking curtly, in the same vexed tone.

"But when is he coming then?" persisted the child.

"He was here yesterday, Georgie," interposed Mrs. Berthon, "but you were out."

"Oh! Ingleton visits here?" remarked Stocking, and bit his lip.

"Yes," said Mrs. Berthon," he called upon Blanche after having met her in the park. But now I must go upstairs and dress for dinner. Georgie, come along, you are going out to dine with me."

The child slipped from Blanche's lap and came towards her mother, who, wishing Stocking good day, retired, followed by Georgie.

Stocking and Blanche were now left alone together. A period of silence ensued which was broken by the former.

"Miss Blanche," he commenced, in a faltering voice, his eyes intently fixed on the fair face in front of him; "Miss Blanche, after so many months I have again come to ask you to give me a decisive answer, and may that answer be favourable. Surely you cannot say I have been impatient or unreasonable, but there is an end to all things, and so there is to my forbearance. In fact," he concluded, and his voice quivered with an amount of passion, for which those who met him in everyday life had scarcely given him credit, "In fact I cannot, I *will* not, think of you but as my future wife. You shall not——" But his vehement utterances were suddenly cut short, and he was left gazing in front of

him, with nervously twitching lips and clenched hands.

"Mr. Stocking," interposed Blanche, in an intensely calm voice, but with features betraying sure signs of inward agitation, "Mr. Stocking, these are strange expressions to use towards me, towards any woman; and now may your own words recoil upon yourself, for I tell you that I cannot, I will not, allow you to coerce me to say that which would for ever in honour bind me."

"But you are bound already, Blanche," he quickly replied.

"Remember that I have a surname please, Mr. Stocking," she retorted, with a strong emphasis on the "Mr."

Stocking was quick-witted enough to perceive that the blustering manner he had before assumed was not palatable to Blanche in her present mood; so he deftly altered his tactics, and now resumed in a tone, the insinuating blandness of which was, perhaps, even more irritating to Blanche than his former threatening rudeness, and affecting to ignore her remark as to her name.

"Forgive me, Blanche, if I have been too vehement. But you should take it as an evidence of the depth of my feelings. Whatever we do, do not let us quarrel, or misunderstand one another. I have no wish to rake up the past, I assure you, but I must say you have a short memory if you cannot recall to mind that you have already

said as much to me as any man, were he in my place, would consider binding. Having refreshed your memory, I can safely leave the rest to your sense of honour."

"Yes," she answered, with unwonted determination; and her large eyes, usually so soft and tender in expression, now sparkled with fire. "Yes, you can leave it to my sense of honour," she repeated. "And would you know what it is that my sense of honour tells me? It bids me defy you, defy you to rake up the past, as you term it. From the past I have nothing to fear. For the future I *should* have, were I to decide to link it with so mean, unmanly a creature as you must be, to resort to such weapons as covert threats towards a woman in order to gain your ends. My ideal of a man is a far nobler one than you can represent."

"Ah!" he resumed, with a distortion of the lips that was intended for a smile, but only resulted in a hard sardonic grin; "such an ideal, perhaps, you have already found in James Ingleton. But I——"

She did not give him time to complete the sentence. With cheeks aglow with indignation, and quivering lips, she rose from her seat and bade him go and taunt her no longer.

"Go," she repeated, with a disdainful gesture, "and do not again show your face in this house until you have learnt sufficiently to command yourself to speak and to act as becomes a man in the presence of a woman."

Then, without deigning to cast him another glance, she passed by him to the door, opened it, and walked out into the hall and up the stairs.

Left to himself, Stocking remained seated, moodily gazing in front of him, until the door once more opened and Mrs. Berthon entered.

Perceiving Stocking alone, a look of questioning surprise came over her face. "Where is Blanche?" she inquired.

Stocking, absorbed in his own reflection, had not heard anyone enter the room, and at the sound of Mrs. Berthon's voice he started.

"Ah! 'tis you, Mrs. Berthon," he said, in thick husky tones.

"Why are you alone; where is Blanche?" she repeated.

He merely shrugged his shoulders.

She was keen-sighted enough, however, to note that his indifference was only assumed, and guessed that something was amiss. She frowned until her heavy eyebrows met in a way that was not pleasant to see, and resumed—

"You two have had a difference, that is easy enough to see; and I think I am at least entitled to be your confidante; so pray tell me all about it. Perhaps I can suggest how matters may be smoothed.

"Mrs. Berthon," replied Stocking, in a sullen tone, his eyes still staring vacantly in the direction of the window, "Mrs. Berthon, I think that fellow

Ingleton has worked some mischief here. Blanche was never too amiable in her intercourse with me, but just now she really treated me in a most insolent manner. And," added he, with somewhat of petulance in his voice, " something tells me that it is on account of Ingleton. At all events, she was never downright rude to me before he visited here. Talks about the past and the future, and that sort of thing, as if I cared a snap for the past. The future will have to take care of itself. I want to live in the present, and make the best of it while it lasts."

Mrs. Berthon, who had seated herself on the sofa near the stove, watched Stocking with much intentness while he spoke, and when he ceased, answered with a deliberate calmness of manner, that contrasted greatly with Stocking's snappish, petulant tones.

" It is as I surmised. You will always go to work in your own headlong way. You have an object before you, and there you go straight at it, giving no heed to the bends in the road, the windings of the footpath, and then, when you knock your head against obstacles which you would not foresee, you set about, man-like, bemoaning your fate, instead of opening your eyes to your own blundering headlong course.

" Very admirable logic, perhaps, but I really do not see what it has to do with the present case," replied, or rather growled, Stocking. " What blundering can you charge me with ? "

"Well, as you will not, or cannot, see where the fault lies, let me then put you on your guard, once for all, against saying anything that might recall the past to Blanche. To yourself you say, but you are mistaken," she added, fixing her eyes upon him as though she meant to mesmerise him, "that the past is as nothing. But my sight is keener than yours; and being a woman, I can understand and probe a woman's inner thoughts; and knowing Blanche as I do, understanding her nature infinitely better than you, or any man for that matter can ever do, I tell you that to her the past is everything; that is, everything that is evil. To her mind it conjures up the only memories of gloom and despair that her young life has yet known, and, therefore, I warn you distinctly, if you wish to obtain any permanent influence over her, never again to strike a key that can unravel this web of memory. If you do, mark my words, that which you hope for will never come to pass. I have cautioned you—now act as you think best."

"You have given me a sound lecturing," answered Stocking, his voice now almost free from its sullenness, "and at all events I can well believe you to be sincere in what you say. For after all," he added, with some asperity, "have you not equal cause to wish the past to remain buried; but, of course, for reasons altogether different than those of Blanche?"

"The present, to my thinking, is not the best time for discussing such points as these," remarked Mrs.

Berthon, with a quickness that showed her eagerness to have done with the subject.

"Oh! the subject is not so tempting to me that I should wish to enlarge upon it at any time, and least of all now," said Stocking, with a gasp of relief, as he rose from his chair. "I shall go now; I shall leave Blanche to get over her fit of the sulks. When I come again let us hope it will be fairer weather. Are you going out to-morrow evening, or are you likely to be at home?"

"To-morrow evening we are going to the Thalia to see "Rob Roy." The last time they produced a new piece there I contented myself on hearing it through the telephone in the music room upstairs. But that does not satisfy me. There is no colour about that sort of thing. 'Tis a lifeless performance at best. Besides I want to see as well as hear, and what the kinteograph can show me is not enough to my liking. So if you can be there also, you may meet us."

"I shall endeavour to be there," said Stocking, but I doubt whether I can. I have an engagement, I think, of some importance. For the present, good day, Mrs. Berthon. I'll not forget your advice."

"Good day," said Mrs. Berthon, giving him her hand, as she conducted Stocking to the door.

On her abrupt departure from the sitting room Blanche had gone straight upstairs to her own bedroom, where she flung herself with mixed feelings of grief and vexation in an arm-chair. With head

thrown back in listlessness, she began to ponder and ponder over some of Stocking's words about the past, until they met with deeper and deeper echoes within her own heart, as the long untouched chord of bitter memories found itself played upon by such worthless, wanton fingers as those of Pelham Stocking.

Yes, the past with its long vista of vaguest gloom was a terror, a hideous dream, and as she thought and pondered, her listlessness gradually disappeared, making way for a feeling of nameless dread, of blank despair, that lent a feverish lustre to her soft brown eyes, while it left her cheeks a waxen pallor, and caused a visible shudder to seize her supple frame. "What right has he," she muttered, or rather hissed, through her clenched teeth; "what, and who is *he*, that he should conjure up those terrors? I will not, *will* not! live again those days of dread, those nights of watching."

CHAPTER VII.

THE reader, having already made the acquaintance of the "Young Alliance Club," needs no re-introduction; but having accompanied us into some parts of this institution, we would introduce him or her to its presiding genius. Farther along the corridor, past the elevators, was a room, bearing on its door this legend:—

"Mr. B. M. SLOWUN, President."

The room was lofty, and handsomely furnished, as befitted one so high placed. On a chair, before a writing desk, Mr. B. M. Slowun was seated.

A glance at him revealed a long coat, baggy trowsers, and big boots, also a tall silk hat.

First appearances are notoriously deceptive, and the four articles mentioned gave no indication to the character of the man.

He was reading a letter. "Why don't they write plainer?" he said, or rather whined. We may remark that his usual method of speech was something between a cry and a whine. For his own edification he dotted the "i's" and crossed the "t's," thereby making the writing more indistinct than it was before. "Bother it! they always trouble me," he said, reading to himself; and having concluded the letter, rose from his seat and said, "Nonsense,

nonsense!" which, next to "bother it," occupied the seat of honour in Mr. Slowun's repertoire of ejaculations.

The shaggy eyebrows, the thick nose, the weak mouth, betrayed the sensuality of the man; the soulless, watery, lack-lustre eyes, bespoke want of energy. The trembling movement of the hands, as he placed one in his mouth, then touched the finger tips to the other, and finally smoothed his hair, were the visible and outward tokens of a nervousness and timidity unsurpassed. Besides this, he stooped, was round-shouldered, and wore a long, straggling beard of dirty grey, which he drew out with his hands occasionally, in order to improve its appearance.

Turning towards the window, and stroking his beard, he cricked his neck in a manner impossible to describe, so as almost to turn his head upside down, at the imminent risk of dislocating his neck, and looked out; this operation, in connection with the others already mentioned, being repeated times innumerable in the course of a day.

Whilst still in this remarkable attitude, a young man entered the room, and observing his principal's posture, attempted to imitate him; and his face assumed a broad grin. Suddenly Mr. Slowun turned round. Thompson (the young man) stood staid and stiff, as though he had been a statue, saluted, and offered a newspaper (the *Half Hour*,) for inspection.

"No one has been in here this morning," said Mr. Slowun.

"Everybody is in the office, Professor," retorted Thompson.

Mr. Slowun seemed flattered with the title, Professor, though it would have been difficult to say what he was Professor of. No doubt some science exceedingly occult. Perhaps, like the American of the nineteenth century, a title was his hobby, because no title existed in the Social state.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" muttered Mr. Slowun.

"But they are here, sir," rejoined Thompson.

"Don't argue with me," said Mr. Slowun, getting out of temper.

"I am not arguing; I know they are," was the answer.

"How do you know? You don't know," said Mr. Slowun, with growing passion.

"Well; I have just been through the offices. I saw everyone in his place; if that is not knowing, what is?" said Thompson.

"Don't argue with me," rejoined Mr. Slowun, trembling with rage.

Thompson being used to these proceedings, which were the usual termination of these little scenes, walked out of the room, whistling a tune to himself, whilst Mr. Slowun stepped to the window in high dudgeon, muttering "Nonsense," and "Bother it," by turns.

Catching sight of the newspaper on his desk, he returned to his seat, scanned the columns in a listless manner, giving himself about ten minutes for

this work, murmuring meanwhile, "There's nothing in it." He stopped as suddenly as he had begun. Turning to some of the unopened letters on his desk, he closely examined the superscription as though their contents would thus become visible. He touched a bell by his side, and Thompson re-entered in obedience to its summons.

"Is this the whole post?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Yes, sir, except the letters for the Secretary and the other officials," answered Thompson.

"I shall have to open the post myself in future," said Mr. Slowun.

Thompson, not knowing whether this remark was intended for himself or not, observed a discreet silence.

Mr. Slowun turned towards that young person, and stared at him like a great blinking owl.

Thompson, being aware of the attention which was being bestowed upon him, did not budge an inch the whole time.

"Open some of these letters," said Mr. Slowun, after the interval of staring.

Thompson immediately took a paper cutter and began opening the letters, but was as quickly stopped by Mr. Slowun exclaiming—

"My dear child, you do not do it artistically enough. You know you should always do everything with artistic feeling. Look! this is the way you should do it." He opened a letter himself with a cautiousness, as if it were an infernal machine ready

to explode at a hard touch. "You don't know what may be inside, or what you may damage; always be careful, there's a good fellow."

Thus admonished, Thompson set more gingerly to work, having great trouble to suppress his risible faculties.

The opening of the letters concluded, Mr. Slowun began reading them. This task he continually interrupted by asking, with his favourite whine, "Why don't they write plainer? Why don't they dot their i's and cross their t's."

Thompson never ventured a reply to the all-absorbing questions.

"What name do you think this is?" said Mr. Slowun, showing a signature at the end of a letter to Thompson, who, glancing at it for a moment, said, "Bligow."

"Are you sure?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Yes, look!" said Thompson, tracing the curves of the signature with his forefinger.

"Never think, always be sure," said Mr. Slowun.

This admonition lost all its weight on Thompson, who took no notice of it.

"He wants to know when there will be something to do for him?"

"Bother him; they all come to me. As if I could help them," said Mr. Slowun.

This remark was also thrown away, for Thompson persevered in his silence.

Mr. Slowun took a pipe from his pocket and filled

it, then pressed a small apparatus on his desk, and lighted his pipe with an electric spark, keeping both hands engaged for some time in warming his pipe. At any rate that must have been his object in keeping one hand fixed round the stem and the other round the bowl.

Turning to Thompson he said, "Has that boy come in yet?" "Boy" was an all-embracing term in Mr. Slowun's vocabulary.

"I don't know," answered Thompson.

"Well, go and see if he has, and tell him I want him," said Mr. Slowun.

Thompson departed on his errand, winking at the door as he went out.

The result of his errand was that Pelham Stocking entered.

"You bad boy, not coming in before," said Mr. Slowun.

"I was detained," answered Stocking.

"I am so tired. Here I am all alone. I have so much to do from morning till night," whined Mr. Slowun.

"You should not overwork yourself," said Stocking, in a sympathetic tone.

"Come and have a cup of coffee," said Mr. Slowun suddenly.

Stocking accepting his invitation, the worthy pair departed.

But Mr. Slowun suddenly came back, looked round with his favourite twist of the neck, and went

away again, telling Thompson, whom they met in the corridor, that they would be out for ten minutes. That spark, upon their departure, performed an impromptu war dance on the office rug, and blowing up the tubes, he shouted through them, "He's out."

* * * * * *

To return to Glimson. Since the night when Bligow had given vent to his feelings by grumbling, he had very often swung those long arms of his, and occasionally run his fingers through his hair, keeping all the while hard at work at that part of the history he had undertaken to write. "It's very strange," he said, speaking to himself, "that a man should be dissatisfied and not know why. It is as plain as possible to my mind where the rub lies. Bligow having brains, as well as a cheerful disposition, finds he cannot work under the present system, which has no use for brains. If we were mere automata we could get on just as well; in fact, much better, because we should be cheaper to the State. What a beautiful Utopia this is—supreme! the ideal! —what hollowness! I wonder if I shall yet make my appearance as a waiter before I eventually become settled. What we require is somebody to stir the people. I believe I am a pretty good judge. It would surprise those in power if they knew the general dissatisfaction. Well, there is 'something rotten in the State of Denmark.' By-the-by, I wonder how often this phrase has been used?"

Having mumbled all this to himself he duly proceeded to swing his arms.

The day after this, finding it necessary to consult a book not in his possession, he went to the Alliance to obtain an order from Mr. Slowun for it.

As he was crossing City Square, he ran against a Miss Smithers, who stopped him.

"Ah, is that you, Glimson?" said she.

"How is Katie, Miss Smithers?" said Glimson, after the customary salutation.

"I hear, a little better," answered she. "I say, Glimson, James is thinking too hard lately—too much study, and the rest of it."

"Whew!" said Glimson to himself, "what's wrong?" Aloud, "He is assisting to complete the history; perhaps it is giving him trouble."

"No, I doubt that. It is something more serious," said Miss Smithers.

"I do not know what it may be," said Glimson, shaking his head.

"He has no right to think! the thinking fashion disappeared long ago. He has no right to be behind the time—to be behind the fashion is eccentric, and to be eccentric sometimes means to be mad. Good-morning, Glimson," and she hurried on.

"Funny person, yet as right as anyone I ever knew. Fashion! whew! It is quite correct," muttered Glimson, walking on towards the Alliance. At the door of this establishment he met Antony, who greeted him with his "Hurrah for Merry England."

Button-holing him, Glimson passed in and met Thompson, who was engaged in kicking his heels for want of better occupation.

"Is Mr. Slowun in?" asked Glimson.

"No," answered Thompson, rapping his knuckles in a devil's tattoo on a panel, as an adjunct to his kicking.

"Stop that row, Thompson," said Glimson.

"Hurrah for Merry England," shouted Antony.

"What is that Indian war dance for?" asked Glimson.

"Why, the Professor went out with Pelham Stocking for coffee," answered Thompson, stopping his row.

"How long will he be?" asked Glimson.

"He said he would be ten minutes. He has been away fifteen, and is safe for another hour," answered Thompson.

"Come, Antony," said Glimson, giving that person no time to accept his invitation, but dragging him to the elevator, he ascended to the smoking-room, where they both seated themselves.

"You know Ingleton?" said Glimson.

The word Ingleton, Antony immediately grasped, but the rest he did not seem to understand.

"You know Ingleton?" repeated Glimson, with emphasis.

"Ye—es," answered Antony, after a pause, as if to collect the sentence.

"Now, does any one hate him?" asked Glimson, as slowly as possible.

Antony, having listened and gathered his scattered thoughts, answered, "Ye—es. Hurrah for Merry England."

"Never mind England," said Glimson. "Who?"

This proved so incomprehensible to Antony that Glimson repeated his former question, with the last attached. Antony puckered his brows so that the wrinkles doubled and redoubled themselves.

At length he answered, "Pelham Stocking."

"How do you know?" asked Glimson, rather amused.

"I do," answered Antony, after the usual pause.

"My lad, you have instinct; you say 'I do,' like a dog—superior to man. Never mind, we will make you Professor Canes one of these days, Antony," said Glimson, laughing at his idea.

Antony gave no heed to it.

"Why does Stocking hate Ingleton?" asked Glimson.

"Because he does," answered Antony.

"A woman's answer," said Glimson to himself, "yet a first-rate one. It is difficult sometimes to find causes."

"Antony," Glimson continued, "what do you do all day long?"

Antony took his pipe from his seat, filled it, and lit it, as if in answer to Glimson's question.

"You smoke?" said that worthy.

Antony nodded assent.

"Smoking promotes reflection," said Glimson to

himself. "Wonder if he thinks." Then aloud to Antony, "You think."

Antony again nodded in the affirmative, watching the blue clouds ascend to the ceiling.

"What about?" asked Glimson.

Antony shook his head in the negative.

"He does not know. Well, I do not wonder at it, few really do. They only guess. Heigho! there, *what is* thinking?" Remembering that he had asked no one this question, and that therefore he could scarcely expect an answer, Glimson seemed satisfied, and swung his arms.

Forgetting Antony's infirmities, he began speaking rather rapidly, swinging his arms now and then to assist the working of his mind. "Queer woman, that Miss Smithers, yet as good as any. That word, 'fashion'—that's her hobby. And she's right, for fashion, like thought, is ever changing. When a thing is fashionable it is good. After the fashion, it is ugly, monstrous, cruel, selfish, wicked; even as the fashion itself may have been. But 'tis only *after* the fashion, when the fit is over, that we call it so. Elizabeth the prudent, Mary the bloody—sisters—one ordered the size of boots, the length of swords, the width of ruffles, the time of prayer; and compelled people to go to church. The other ordained the religion, and compelled its observance. In this they both agreed. Tyranny they called it then. Later on both characters were duly whitewashed: The Virgin Elizabeth, and Holy Mary. I wonder

why people should have troubled themselves to compel others to think their way. They couldn't help it. They only followed the fashion. Your Protestants did it; your Catholics, your Puritans, your Socialists, your Freethinkers—all in their turns reintroduced the fashion of directing other people's thoughts; each, in turn, pulled the strings, and moved the puppets. To restrict thought, dictate people's religion and manners, check the free course of individuality, and lay down the hours of labour, has been the fashion in all epochs. At one time it was the turn of thought, religion, and customs; now the restraint of individuality is the hobby. A century ago it was the hours of labour. How queer! To prevent a man making the best use of his life according to his own lights. How grand, noble, beautiful! What tyranny on the part of those who preached freedom—freedom of thought, not of action. Bid a bird fly, and pinion his wings; how ingenious! What simple folks they must have been! Yet they were not different to present day people. Men are as sensible as a flock of sheep—a high compliment that. Let but one take a leap in the dark, and the rest will follow. Given a party cry, a good catch-word, and you may win a thousand to your side in a moment."

"Hullo, you," turning to Antony, "you did not understand me."

Antony shook his head in the negative.

"I quite believe you," said Glimson. "I wonder when that President of ours will return?"

As if in answer to his question, Thompson, now doleful, entered the room. "Slowun's downstairs," said he.

"Really," said Glimson, not appearing very delighted at the information.

"Yes, he is there right enough," rejoined Thompson. "Coming down?"

Glimson followed Thompson out of the room, leaving Antony to the enjoyment of his pipe, his thoughts, and his ejaculation, "Hurrah for Merry England," to which he gave utterance as Glimson and Thompson departed.

Once below, Glimson made straight for Mr. Slowun's room, having first received the information from Thompson, "that he was cracked," and that "Pelham Stocking was with him."

"Good morning, Mr. Slowun," said Glimson, on entering that worthy's sanctum.

"Good morning, my boy. I very seldom see you now. Why do you not come oftener?" said Mr. Slowun.

"Ah! how do?" said Stocking, emerging from the furthest corner of the room.

"Very well," answered Glimson, turning to Stocking. "The History takes up all my time," turning to Mr. Slowun; "in fact, this is what I came here for, sir. I want an order for this work.

He handed Mr. Slowun a piece of paper, saying, "Kindly give me a note for it."

"Nonsense! Rubbish!" said Mr. Slowun. This

remark evidently referring to the way in which Glimson's time was occupied. "What do you want this book for?" he said.

"For reference," answered Glimson. "You know Ingleton and I are engaged on this History."

At the mention of Ingleton's name, Stocking's face fell, and a sneer came over it, while Mr. Slowun muttered, "Bother it."

Mr. Slowun gave Glimson an order for the book, who, upon receiving the same, took his departure, muttering to himself as he left the Alliance, "Antony, your instinct told you that Stocking is Ingleton's enemy; why did it not tell you that Slowun was one also?" A reflection that passed away as soon as it was formed, for Glimson, seeing the electric transport passing the Parade, made for it, whistling as he went a chorus from "The Diver."

To return to Messrs Slowun and Stocking.

Glimson having departed, Mr. Slowun said, "That fellow is a fool, Pelham," and relishing his own power of penetration, he laughed. What a world was in that laugh. First it sounded "he! he! he!" and then its owner turned a colour commonly associated with copper dimmed by smoke.

"Well, he does work with energy," said Stocking, with a sneer.

"I can't, you know; I make a brave show of it, but I don't do it. I am so tired, you know. Better come and have a cup of coffee, my child," whined Mr. Slowun.

They departed this wise: Mr. Slowun went out, and suddenly turned back, cricked his neck to take an upside-down observation of nothing in particular, and then turned round, reset his head into its proper position, but putting his fingers in his mouth, touching the other hand, and then smoothing his hair and walking on, turning suddenly round at every other step, as if to assure himself that no dog was barking at his heels. Pelham Stocking followed at a respectful distance with his head on his left shoulder. Both their walks partook of the nature of a shuffle, they being more or less knock-kneed. On reaching the steps, Mr. Slowun met Thompson, and said, "I am going out for ten minutes, but don't tell anyone, will you?" Thompson, having undertaken not to impart this information to anyone, Mr. Slowun shuffled out, followed by his aide-de-camp.

"More coffee," muttered Thompson. "What a lot of coffee that man gets down himself in the course of the day; it would astonish some people I know." Having concluded, Thompson gave vent to his feelings by another of the war dances for which he was justly celebrated.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE month of October had ushered itself in with a gloom, surprising indeed, if bright days of September were taken into account. The meteorological office had predicted, had, in fact, staked its existence, upon dirty weather. But those who know, *i.e.*, those who knew nothing about it, expected otherwise, thus depreciating the value of science; and trusting to the fact that onions had been scarce, and nuts ditto; therefore it would be good weather. Science thus disparaged, excepted the challenge, and even threatened to *make* bad weather, if need be, for the sake of vindicating its character. But although prepared to do so in its own defence, the skies themselves had asserted the correctness of the meteorologists' views.

Bligow was standing in Liberator Square watching some children who were attempting to catch the stray drops from the fountain; and when the drops were wafted into their eyes, instead of their hands, Bligow laughed.

Therefore it may be inferred that Bligow was in his usual good humour. He was not aware that his talk at the "Alliance" had produced any effect, or had even been thought over and talked over by others. He had spoken on that occasion seriously, yet—as he fancied—hopelessly and even aimlessly.

"I made a fool of myself," he said to himself at times, when he thought of the matter. In the end his good humour had prevailed, and he hardly troubled himself further concerning a matter he could not alter.

Thus we find him, hands in pocket, taking all the fun he can get from the children's play.

While still engrossed in this pastime, Antony (the wrinkled faced) passed by, walking rapidly.

Bligow hailed him, but Antony, just giving himself time to sing out, "Hurrah for Merry England," was off again.

Bligow smiled at the queer greeting and murmured, "What is that fellow hurrying along for?" It being a question too difficult to solve, Bligow sauntered away towards the park, and, taking a seat on a bench near the lake, he observed a duck fishing.

"Talk about circumstances making the man," said Bligow, still watching the upper part of the duck. "Ducks understand matters much better, and fit into their groove much easier." The return of the duck to her ordinary mode of progress stopped further contemplation on this subject, and Bligow turned about in search for something else to rivet his attention.

Finding nothing of sufficient interest, he rose and walked slowly away from the margin of the lake. Suddenly a bright thought struck him.

"I will go and see Willie Heughin," he said.

Satisfied that this would afford him better entertainment than either the fountain, the children, or the ducks, he walked on at a good pace.

"Why! just now I wanted to know why Antony was making such pace, and now I am doing it myself," he said, as he went along. He re-crossed Liberation Square, and passing through the avenue leading off, he kept walking till a notice board caught his sight—

"The next aerial car will leave for all towns due north at twelve o'clock."

"Plenty of time," said Bligow. In a few minutes he had left the protecting cover of glass. In front of him, not a hundred paces away, was the Aerial Station. Hurrying on he soon reached it, and then he slackened his pace. Entering the station, he caught sight of a most peculiar individual, whose chief features were a nose of distinct mulberry colour, and eyebrows that arched upwards at the end.

Bligow greeted him. "Hallo, Wilkins, is Willie Heughin about?"

"Yes, he is in the establishment," was the answer.

"Engaged?" asked Bligow.

"No; next car don't go for some time," answered Wilkins.

"Where about is he?" questioned Bligow.

"Try room A, or if he is not there, B on the second floor, or A on the third floor might hit the

nail," rejoined Wilkins, who prided himself upon his exactitude.

Bligow went forward, saying, "That means he is here; but where exactly I don't know; but it would never do for me to say so," and he smiled at the idea—his pet broad smile.

Trying all the rooms in turn, and enquiring of everyone he met, he at last found the person he wanted.

Willie Heughin was some twenty-eight years of age. He was as flaxen-haired and moustached as a typical Saxon, and ruddy with fresh air and exercise; amongst possessions being a nose of real ambrosial tint, which William claimed to be hereditary, and proof of the blue blood of his ancestors from before the Norman Conquest. He was standing against the mantel-shelf, legs spread out to their fullest extent, his fingers in his vestcoat pockets.

"Well! how in Heaven's name came you hear?" said Heughin.

Bligow seated himself.

"How dare you, sir, during the course of my professional duties; sir, I repeat—how dare you do it?" said Heughin.

Bligow laughed. "Look at his professional duties," he said, in short spasms.

"Well, sir, would you insinuate that my professional duties are not disturbed by the levity of such a miserable wretch as you," enquired Heughin, in as serious a manner as he could accommodate himself to.

"I thought your professional duties occurred on the average about ten minutes in every hour, and I have called between," said Bligow, entering into the spirit of the joke.

"You are about right," answered Heughin. "There is so very little to do, because it is so awfully cut up. There are twenty here for every one necessary."

"I had better come and join you then, and assist you in your onerous duties," said Bligow.

"What! would you prevent me walking up and down these stairs looking at people, and giving an order which is painful from its monotonous character?" queried Heughin.

"Why, you are not as lazy as I thought," said Bligow.

"Don't measure other people's corn by your own ——what's er name," reiterated Heughin.

"I wish I had something to occupy my time," said Bligow.

"Fall in love, my friend," quizzed Heughin.

"Couldn't do it to save my life," answered Bligow.

"I would not like to give you a chance," said Heughin, winking.

The tinkling of a bell was heard, and Heughin went to the telephone, listened, and spoke down it.

"There you are. The Edinburgh car is reported at Derby." He walked up to a desk, and in an open book, he recorded the fact, and the time of

arrival to the sixteenth of a second. "There are four rooms where this matter is recorded this minute. Would you believe, that I do not know how many rooms there are in this establishment, Bligow?" said Heughin.

"I believe you; but what are they all for? It has always been a puzzle to me, what you all do, and what so many rooms are required for," said Bligow.

"It would be difficult for me to say. There are chiefs, subs, overseers, observers, down-men, carmen, porters, and a lot of others; I dare say, every office and post is quadrupled. For instance, all I do is to time the departures and arrivals of the Northern special, which leaves and arrives every hour. There's hard work for you, if you like," said Heughin thoughtfully."

"I wrote to that old fogy of a Slowun, if there was an opening anywhere, and he has answered me. Look here!"—he held out the letter for Heughin's inspection.—"'Wait a month.' That is nice, is it not," said Bligow.

Further conversation was interrupted by another tinkle of the bell. Heughin again went to the telephone, and recorded in his book, "The down car will be here in a minute." He said, turning to Bligow, "I am going down." He went out, followed by Bligow, and descended by the elevator. Arrived at the platform, they stepped out.

The platform was of peculiar construction. It was some hundred feet wide, and a hundred and

twenty feet long, and open to the heavens. In the centre was the apparatus, usually connected with an elevator. On the platform was a large chronometer and a looking glass over it. Into this Heughin looked, and called out, "She is not in sight yet," and walked away. Bligow was looking at the heavens; and Heughin hearing another tinkle of a bell, ran to the reflector and, looking in, said, "Here she is," and pushed a button near him; and in response, the car of the elevator rose. Still looking in the glass, he said, "Right," and pressed the stop of the chronometer.

Meanwhile, an enormous aerial car was hovering overhead, and slowly descended to the level of the elevator; the passengers entered the elevator, which then descended.

"There, another matter settled, now for the departing car. Come on, Bligow," said Heughin.

Together they went to another platform, where the same routine was gone through, except that the elevator car ascended with people, and from that they entered the aerial car.

Amongst those who ascended was Dr. Shindle, who, seeing Bligow, said, "How are we? how do we do?"

"Pretty well, thank you," answered Bligow.

"That is all right," said the doctor, washing his his hands with imaginary soap.

"How is James Ingleton's sister?" asked Bligow.

"Nothing scientific—nothing special; there has not been such a dearth of special cases; very few would believe it. She is poorly, but nothing special. Good-day," and the doctor ascended.

Bligow smiled at the doctor's lament about the want of special cases.

Wilkins, the mulberry-nosed, approached Heughin and said, "Are you going to dinner? if so, I'll take your post."

"What say you, Bligow?" asked Heughin. Bligow being willing, the pair went to the nearest common dining hall, and ordered their meal, for which they were duly debited on their cards. Glancing round, Bligow saw Jerrold Trevors eating his dinner in as gingerly a fashion as if he were playing chess, and each mouthful meant a great move. Heughin, not being acquainted with him, asked who that "skewered-faced" party was.

"Oh! that is Jerrold Trevors," answered Bligow laughing; and attracted Jerry's attention by rattling a knife on a glass.

Jerry gave a sign of recognition, and went on with his dinner in his preoccupied manner.

"He is playing chess with the vegetables against his beef," said Bligow, between two mouthfuls.

"Is he though. He must be a funny customer," said Heughin.

The rest of the dinner was eaten in silence, and not a sound was heard except the splashing of the small fountain in the centre of the dining hall, and

the whispering of the jute plants, with their lofty neighbours, the tree ferns.

Dinner finished, Jerry came over to where Bligow sat, and he immediately introduced him to Hueghin; and all three conversed together for some time, till Heughin took his leave, to return to the Aerial Station.

"Any news?" asked Bligow, after Heughin's departure.

"No, not much. By-the-by, James Ingleton was in here just now, so was Pelham Stocking. They were in deep conversation. Afterwards Antony gave a look in, but he left directly Stocking did," said Jerry.

"Oh! Did they speak to you?" asked Bligow.

"M', yes, nothing particular; er, Stocking said, 'I should hear a surprise before long.' Wonder what that means?" said Jerry.

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Bligow.

"Ingleton and Stocking are not the best of friends, are they?" asked Jerry.

"I have never heard so. They are not very thick, it is true. Stocking, however, seems always to be pleased at any token of friendship on Ingleton's part, so that the boot is on the wrong foot."

"Homeward bound?" asked Jerry, after awhile.

"No, not particularly; but I'll go your way."

They went out, walking slowly, till they arrived at Jerry's domicile, when, after taking leave of him, Bligow walked quickly till he came to the Alliance.

Entering, he espied the ubiquitous Thompson, who informed him that he was out (pointing with his forefinger towards the President's room), and adding that Ingleton was in the smoking room.

Thither Bligow immediately repaired.

* * * *

Since his conversation with Stocking, Ingleton had been in a state bordering on madness. For, although his talk had eased him for a time, he had returned to his usual mood of thought, and the food of reflection had proved very bitter. In fact, the more he reflected on the present position of the nation, the more certain he felt that the rights of the people had been outraged. He chafed under the weight of the collectivism which had rode rough-shod over individual man. But a short visit of Glimson, during which that worthy had spoken with his usual candour and swinging of arms, had somewhat revived his spirits; and after a great deal of thought, and many hours of discussion between his mind and his conscience, he arrived at the Alliance with a fixed purpose. First to see Bligow, whom he had not met for a long time, and then to take certain steps, which he had already decided upon. Bligow found him sitting in the smoking room. The moment he entered, Ingleton greeted him with "The very person I wish to see."

"Well, here he is; what do you require of me?" asked Bligow.

"Are you still of the same mind?" asked Ingleton.

"About what?" rejoined Bligow.

"It was but a dream, an idle moment," said Ingleton, displeased.

"If you would explain yourself you may get a better answer," said Bligow.

Ingleton, seeing he was not going about the matter as he should, began again—"You are dissatisfied with the social state?"

"Yes, I am," answered Bligow immediately.

"You did not know why, but I explained to Stocking," said Ingleton.

"What had Stocking to do with it?" queried Bligow.

"Oh! you have not seen him then. He told me, in the conversation you had with him and Glimson, that you were dissatisfied, but knew not why," said Ingleton.

"Yes, that is true; but why did Stocking come to you about it?" said Bligow, perplexed.

"He told me he also was sensible that something was wanting; and in the course of conversation I think I struck the right key," answered Ingleton.

"And what was it?" asked Bligow.

"Individuality," said Ingleton.

"I see it—I see it," shouted Bligow, when the word had been uttered.

"You are still of opinion that the present social status is bad?" said Ingleton.

"Yes."

"Supposing it could be altered, would you assist?"

"Yes; most decidedly."

"Even at the cost of life—yours and others if need be?"

"I would engage in it if you led the van."

"You are prepared for the sacrifice?"

"Certainly."

"Of Glimson I am sure; Stocking would join too—I shall begin immediately."

"How?"

"I will awaken the whole of the 'Young Alliance' to the peril of the situation."

"How?"

"I have thought it out. A lecture, or a debate, on Individualism would stir them."

"I think so; but, perhaps, the subject is tabooed."

"Then I must force it."

"Hurrah! I will assist."

"Individuality—I shall preach somehow or other."

The door was heard to creak but no one entered. Stocking, who had been eavesdropping, hurried away to Mr. Slowun, and addressing him, said—"If Ingleton comes here refuse what he asks," and hurried off.

Meanwhile Ingleton and Bligow continued their conversation.

"I'm going to see Mr. Slowun now," said Ingleton.

"Strike at once, and true," said Bligow.

They descended, and were met on the staircase by Thompson, of whom they inquired whether Mr. Slowun was in. They were informed that he was.

"On second thoughts I had better leave you for the present, and wait here," said Bligow.

"Yes, it would be better," answered Ingleton, as he made his way to Mr. Slowun's sanctum.

The day was already fast waning, and when Ingleton retired, he found Mr. Slowun seated in a chair which was placed in semi-obscurity.

Ingleton having duly greeted Mr. Slowun, he was requested to be seated.

"What can I do for you, my child?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Is there an open date for a debate or lecture," asked Ingleton, "within a short period?"

Mr. Slowun first consulted his watch, then opened a drawer. Thereupon, he got out of his chair, and went through the performance, such as has already been described to the reader, of smoothing his hair and cricking his neck, and said, "Wait a moment; we had better have a little light."

To this Ingleton acquiesced, and Mr. Slowun touched a button, and the room was filled with light from the incandescent lamps.

"A lecture?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Yes, I would give one," answered Ingleton.

"What subject have you in your mind?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Individualism," answered Ingleton eagerly.

"Rubbish, nonsense," said Mr. Slowun.

"I beg your pardon," said Ingleton, who could not properly catch the words.

"A bad subject," said Mr. Slowun.

"I do not think so," said Ingleton, laconically.

To be contradicted so flatly was more than the senior member of the Slowun family could bear. He did not strike Ingleton; he did not speak, but simply glared. He extended his great fishy eyes without uttering a syllable. He glared on the principle—that if looks could kill, he would make an end of Ingleton there and then.

Ingleton, not being used to this sort of thing, at first thought that Mr. Slowun had suddenly been bereft of his senses; and he had already made up his mind to have him conveyed to a proper institution, when Mr. Slowun turned round and walked to the far end of the room.

"Is there an open night for my subject?" asked Ingleton, after a pause, and when he had come to the conclusion that this must be one of Mr. Slowun's eccentricities.

"Bother it, bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun.

"Well, sir," Ingleton said, with growing impatience.

"I don't know," said Mr. Slowun at last.

"Ingleton was about to speak, when Mr. Slowun remarked, "I will see."

He rang a bell, upon which a rather thick-set man entered. He was the Chief Secretary.

"Mr. Garford," said Mr. Slowun, addressing him, "Ingleton, here, wishes to lecture—or debate——"

Ingleton interrupted—"What date is open?"

"Let me see what subject is objected to." Mr. Garford walked to the bell next to Mr. Slowun's desk, and pressed the button.

Thompson appeared, and Mr. Garford gave him a key, and told him to get his debate book, and entertainment book.

Thompson left the room, and soon returned with the books required, and departed.

Mr. Garford turned the leaves of one of his books, and after a moment's search said, "The eleventh of the month is vacant."

"Let me see," said Mr. Slowun, putting on a pair of *pince-nez*, which immediately dropped off his nose. After some trouble with the glasses, he looked at the book and said, "Yes, the eleventh is an open night," and Mr. Slowun closed the volume. "But are you sure; let me see;" and he again adjusted his glasses, and reopened the book, glancing at every page in turn, and murmuring, "Bother it."

Having at last found it, he looked closely at the page, and came to the conclusion that the eleventh really was a vacant date.

"My subject is Individualism, sir," said Ingleton. "Having received the above information, you can notify me for a debate or lecture, for that date."

"I fancy that is one of the subjects objected to by the Senate," said Garford, turning the leaves of the the other book; "that is, they do not object, but advise that certain subjects be tabooed. Listen," he said, as he found the page, "'It is advised that the undermentioned subjects be carefully prohibited. The Secretary, or President, should use persuasion that no debate or lecture be held on these subjects, as the Senate deem them dangerous to the State.' Among the subjects here mentioned is Individualism."

"I advise you not to lecture on this subject," said Mr. Slowun.

"I thank you for your kind advice, but I intend to do so, all the same," answered Ingleton.

Mr. Garford left the room.

"I cannot, under these circumstances, give you leave to lecture on this subject," said Mr. Slowun.

"But I intend to do so against any dissuasion," reiterated Ingleton."

"Bother it! Nonsense!" said Mr. Slowun.

Stocking entered the room.

Taking no notice of him, Ingleton said, "Nonsense, or no nonsense, I am firm on this subject."

"What is the question?" said Stocking.

"I have requested leave for a debate, or lecture, and am refused. Free speech should not be opposed in a free country."

"Bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun.

"I agree with you," said Stocking. "Who opposes it?"

"My orders are against it," said Mr. Slowun in his whining, apologetic way.

"You will face the opposition, eh?" said Stocking.

"Decidedly," answered Ingleton.

"I am glad to hear it," said Stocking.

At this, Mr. Slowun, who had been acting on Stocking's cue, grew confused, and muttered,—

"Nonsense! Bother it!"

After some further talk, which in nowise improved matters, Ingleton departed with the firm intention of lecturing on "Individualism."

After his departure, Mr. Slowun asked Stocking what he intended to do now.

"Let matters take their own course, now Ingleton is so obstinate. The more you oppose him, the more determined he will be," said Stocking.

"What does he want to lecture on such a subject for?" queried Mr. Slowun.

Stocking, not wishing to impart any reason, knowing that even an explanation would not clear the mist from Mr. Slowun's eyes, said he did not know.

Meanwhile Ingleton rejoined Bligow, and related his conversation with Mr. Slowun; and they repaired to the smoking room, where they discussed the subject at some length, and firmly determined to brave the Senate.

"Well, I will lecture, whatever occurs," said Ingleton; and ringing a bell, Thompson appeared on the scene.

Ingleton requested writing materials, with which Thompson returned with alacrity, whistling as he went.

"What do you think of this?" said Ingleton, handing round a paper on which was written in very large characters, "James Ingleton offers to debate on 'Individualism,' in the Hall of the Alliance, on the 11th of October, at 7 p.m. In the event of no one accepting the debate, he will lecture on this subject."

"Bravo!" cried Bligow, "Bravo!" and then he fell to laughing in his heartiest way. "Won't this wake up some of them!" he said.

Ingleton took the notice paper and pressed it between two bands on a notice board on the walls.

"Sufficient unto the day is the work thereof," he said, and went out.

CHAPTER IX.

PELHAM STOCKING had now worked upon James Ingleton's mind and thoughts as a good musician plays upon the strings of his instrument. Cunning and shrewd, he calculated every move in the great game of life, gauging every check, white to black, black to white, until, as he thought, he held the game, and mate might be called at a given moment.

It certainly did not require much to stir the pent up feelings of a man like Ingleton; it required not much volubility, on Stocking's part, to induce Ingleton to declare himself, since he had passed his whole existence in brooding on the monotonous conditions of life brought about through the subjection imposed upon everyone by the "Levellers." Therefore, Stocking, in pluming himself that it was owing to his keen perceptions that Ingleton had had his eyes opened to the real state of things, had certainly over estimated the value of his own craftiness.

It was late on the night on which Ingleton had spoken to Mr. Slowun, that Stocking was wending his way homeward. He had read the notice that Ingleton had placed upon the notice board with a covert sneer; but now, on his way home, the mask fell, and the true expression of his features stood revealed.

The moon occasionally threw its silvery beams betwixt the great clouds as Stocking walked along. His face, lit up by the faint light, was ghastly, even fiendish in expression.

How often has that moonbeam fallen on similar faces; how its penetrating eye reached from above to poor mortal on earth! How searching its light, as it passed from face to brain! How ever watchful was that eye! Does that eye see! Does it record those deeds committed in the stillness of the night? How foul then must be the pictures that are retained on its retina!

Stocking did not like to walk under Heaven's search light, so he crossed the road; but through a break in the clouds the moon, ever watchful, followed him.

Stocking was certainly dissatisfied with the spirit of the age. For such a man as he, it did not leave sufficient scope for action. For the rest he was not particular whether he could ruin Ingleton under the present state, or under any future regime. As a matter of choice, he preferred doing so under the existing order of things, as that involved no delay.

"I shall—I will do it at once," he said to himself; "the more obstacles I throw in his way the more he will exert himself to overcome them, and the easier will be his downfall. Pooh! pooh! foolish dreamer, I have already got you into an embroglio from which you could not extricate yourself without loss of honour. Honour! vain, hollow word; for which

you would sacrifice your life. I shall be your friend"—he gnashed his teeth—"I shall aid and abet you to the last. I shall mourn you more than all others"—the light of the moon revealed a sardonic smile on his face.

"Now, Obstinacy! you shall prove yourself true to your character. To-morrow shall bring forth the fiat, which shall arouse the Senate against you. You will attempt to overcome it. Pooh! pooh! your individuality shall find itself lodged in a nice cool room at the Government's expense. Your action might even be made treason to the State—*that* would be *death*. What ignominy that would be? Then I should win the prize. *I, Pelham Stocking*, would be the victor."

The moon here lit up a face fiendishly triumphant.

"A few others, too, would cease to be. That wretched Antony, and that Glimson, and Bligow, could join the crew."

The hands twitched, as though he were choking the very life out of his intended victims. Still walking on, he came to a large building, which was bathed in electric light, so that the moon's rays were no longer visible. It was the home of the *Half Hour* newspaper. Stocking stopped, looked round him, and entered.

* * * * * *

It was morning, the rain had fallen during the night; the prediction of the weather prophets had

thus been verified. The fountains played again, and the sun shone, but without warmth, but it caused the drops of water to glisten.

James Ingleton was seated in his study reading the *Half Hour*. He came to a paragraph which seemed to strike him, for he read and re-read it, and then folding the paper he put it into his pocket, and walked into the room where Katie was lying fast asleep. Nellie entered the apartment.

"She has passed a good night," said Ingleton, addressing his sister.

"Yes, there are signs of improvement," she answered.

"I am going out, Nell, but I will not be long," said Ingleton, as he left. He donned his top coat, and hat, and departed. He had hardly proceeded a dozen steps when he was met by Bligow, who had a newspaper in his hands, and was winking and laughing by turns.

"I was just coming to see you," said Ingleton.

"And I to you," answered Bligow.

"Have you seen it?" said Ingleton.

"Yes, that is why I was coming," said Bligow.

"I should like to see Glimson," remarked Ingleton.

"I thought so, and sent round to him to meet me at my place, and wait for me," said Bligow.

Bligow lived a few streets off, and they made their way there. The house was in every respect similar to Ingleton's.

"Has Mr. Glimson come yet," asked Bligow, of a bright-eyed boy, the counterpart of his own jovial face.

"Yes," answered the boy, whose name was Tommy.

They entered, and found Glimson seated by the electric-heated stove.

"Good morning," said he, addressing the two others.

"Have you seen the article in the *Half Hour*?" queried Ingleton.

"No," answered Glimson, "I have not read the paper yet."

Ingleton and Bligow removed their coats and hats, seating themselves near Glimson.

"Well, read," said Bligow, handing his copy to Glimson.

"Wait," said Ingleton.

Glimson let the paper rest upon his knee.

"Yesterday I saw Bligow, also Mr. Slowun," said Ingleton, "whom I asked for permission to lecture on Individualism. He declined, as the subject is tabooed. I have placed a notice in the 'Alliance,' offering to debate on my own responsibility; now they have inserted an article in the paper about it."

"I admire your pluck," said Glimson, "and will assist if necessary."

"This is what they write," said Ingleton, taking up the paper; "I fancy it must refer to me:—'From a nest of sparrows, the chirruping of the

strongest is now heard—poor weak chirrup, which can be stopped for ever when the great bird swoops down upon it. Does it fancy that its chirrup is the shriek of the eagle? If so, it is mistaken, for it will easily be silenced. Amid the cries of the great birds, the chirruping of a sparrowling is not heard, therefore let it silence its voice.' Nice, is it not?"

Bligow was laughing heartily.

"Why this mysterious method of writing? I have seen it before, but never took notice of such hints," said Glimson.

"Oh! they will not speak openly; but in another column," said Ingleton, "referring to the 'Alliance,' they say—'We are informed that a lecture is proposed on a subject best left alone. We advise the lecturer not to persevere in attempting to force a subject which is of such a very obstrusive character, and which must prove very uninteresting to its hearers. We cannot comprehend anyone wishing to lecture on a subject which does not possess a spark of interest, I dare say they cannot, or—will not."

"I wonder who gave them the information. Do you think our old fogey?" said Bligow.

"You mean Slowun?" said Ingleton.

"Not he," answered Glimson, with evident contempt, "he could not trouble himself so much, if it meant life or death to him."

"I suppose the facts leaked out in the day's transactions at the 'Alliance,' which are generally

gone over by the press people," said Ingleton, indifferently.

"I shall write a stiff note to the *Half Hour* people, telling them to mind their own business, and speak plainly if they wish to speak at all," said Glimson.

"No, you had better not; let us treat it with indifference," remarked Ingleton.

"Yes, let us wait for something official, then we can take action," said Bligow. "I will re-copy your notice, Ingleton, and post it up in the library and gymnasium, subscribing my name to it if you like."

"Do you think anyone is likely to accept your challenge for a debate?" said Glimson to Ingleton.

"May be so, but if not I will lecture. Individuality is the keystone to the reform of the existing state, and I shall push it forward under any circumstances; either we must reform the Constitution on those lines, or leave things as they are."

"A debate would certainly be preferable," said Bligow.

"If no one offers, I will accept the challenge. Bligow and a few others can rouse the interest. I bet we rouse the fellows surprisingly," said Glimson.

"I accept," said Ingleton.

"It will not be my fault if the interest is not keen," said Bligow, enthusiastically.

"You can reproduce my notice, Bligow," observed Ingleton.

"Wait! I will take the bull by the horns," said Glimson; and going to a writing desk, he took a sheet of paper and wrote—'Mark Glimson accepts James Ingleton's challenge to debate on Individualism. Date and time accepted.' "What is this like, eh?" said he, showing it to both Ingleton and Bligow.

"Come, we will immediately place them under Ingleton's notice," said Glimson.

Meanwhile Bligow was making copies of the latter document.

Having finished, they made their way to the Alliance, where they met the ubiquitous Thompson, repeating one of his innumerable war dances in the porch. Passing through, they ascended the elevator, and entered the smoking room. On looking at the notice-board, they found Ingleton's notice had disappeared, being replaced by a sheet of paper, on it written "by order," and the stamp of the Alliance.

The three friends were for a moment perplexed.

"More opposition!" exclaimed Bligow.

"Well, never mind," said Ingleton, "post the new notice up."

This Bligow did, and departed for the other rooms, and posted the notices as pre-arranged.

"Anybody about?" asked Glimson, when Bligow returned.

"No! not a soul," answered Bligow.

"They might have written 'the freedom of debate

is prohibited,' *that* would have been more to the point. Re-enter! England under the Feudal system. Please oblige with a Curfew Bell! Or, perhaps, 'Holy Russia' in the nineteenth century has been accepted as an example. Beautiful!" said Glimson, swinging his arms.

"Have they the law on their side?" said Ingleton.

"Act 3, of year II., states" (Glimson swung his arms)—"'The Senate may take such steps, at any time, as may be found necessary for the maintenance of the peace and the welfare of the State.'"

"With such an order at their backs they might do whatever they pleased," said Bligow.

"Let them!" exclaimed Ingleton.

"The more they oppose us, the more it will eventually be to our advantage," said Glimson.

"But supposing the opposition were to annihilate you, what then?" said Stocking, who suddenly entered the room. "By-the-by, what is under discussion?" He seated himself.

Bligow addressed himself to him:—"Ingleton's debate upon Individualism."

"Oh! yes; what have you decided?" said Stocking.

"We intend to hold it under any circumstances," replied Glimson, with another swing of his arms.

"Quite right! I trust, if I can be of any assistance, you will allow me to act," said Stocking.

"With all my heart," rejoined Glimson (*sotto voce*),

"especially if you succumbed under the effort, my friend."

"Suppose the opposition annihilated you. What then?" queried Stocking.

"First let them annihilate us, and *then* we will consider that matter in all its bearings," replied Glimson, sarcastically.

"Annihilation would be a climax which would leave no opportunity for consultation or consideration—it would not require any," said Stocking.

"You are a bird of ill omen," said Bligow; "croaking directly you hear of a bold plan. I hate your pessimistic views. Why should we not succeed?"

Stocking, discomfited by this attack, said—"I do not wish to be pessimistic. In fact, if you know me, I generally am optimistic in my views. I always believe in a silver lining to the cloud, but I think it best to count upon the greatest evil, and then rejoice at its non-occurrence. They laugh best who laugh last."

At this moment an attendant brought in the last number of the *Half Hour*, still damp from the press.

Following him came Antony who, looking round, came silently up to Ingleton, shook hands with him, walked away—shivering as he passed Stocking—and seating himself on a bench, shouted—"Hurrah for Merry England."

He as usual took out his pipe, filled it and lit it,

and peering through that haze which seemed ever to surround him, he eyed Stocking in such a manner that the latter, had he observed it, would have been reminded of a dog protecting its mistress or master from the onslaught of an assassin. At the present moment this mist which surrounded Antony was intensified by the smoke which he blew straight at Stocking, causing that worthy to be decidedly irritated. So much so that he removed his seat to a place where the light fell full on his face. This was just what Antony wanted, who ceased his attacks; nor must it be thought that Antony did this in a hurry—no, it was all done in a most methodical way.

The young man who had brought the newspaper had scarcely departed before Glimson was deep in its columns.

"Ho! ho!" shouted Glimson; "listen; I call this impudence." He proceeded to read—"'We are pleased to see that the lecture to be given at the Alliance, to which we referred in an earlier edition, will not be held. No doubt the good sense of the lecturer, and our advice, has prevailed.' There is a nice prevarication for you!"

"I think such a matter requires immediate rectification," said Bligow, indignantly.

"Decidedly so; at least, if you intend to persevere," said Stocking, in his blandest tones.

"Here is something else," said Glimson, still intent upon the newspaper—"'The chirrup of the

fledgling has already been silenced, and the note of clamour is already forgotten. Farewell, little chirping sparrow, thou hast tumbled from thy nest in a flutter. Thy chirp was as the death song of the swan.' More mystery and more rubbish."

"I shall immediately write to the *Half Hour*," said Ingleton; and he rang a bell.

Thompson appeared, and as directed, immediately returned with writing materials, which he placed on a table, at which Ingleton seated himself. Antony was about to shout, but Ingleton, putting up his hand, stayed him.

Stocking left the room. "Only for a minute," he said; and Ingleton wrote quickly; and by the time he had finished Stocking had re-entered the room.

"I have written this," said Ingleton, reading from the letter—"'To the Editor of the *Half Hour*. Sir,—I have observed inuendos in your paper in respect to a lecture, or debate, on Individualism, which I intend holding on the 11th inst. Now, so far from having given up my idea, I have not wavered in the least. The notice I placed on the notice-board of the Alliance Club smoking room was removed, and replaced 'by order'—that is the word—by a sheet bearing the imprint and the seal of the Alliance. I would ask you to immediately publish this letter, in order to correct the impression conveyed by your remarks. I have repeated my offer for a debate, and have been accepted. So much for the chirrup silenced for ever. I trust this letter

will appear without emendation or omission.—Yours obediently, JAMES INGLETON.'"

"This is good," remarked Bligow.

"You can add that I have accepted the debate," said Glimson.

Ingleton added the necessary postscript.

"You have now cast the die, and you cannot retreat if you want to be consistent," said Stocking.

"I know not retreat," said Ingleton.

"He who *fears*, need not *join*," said Glimson.

"*I* do not fear mortal foe," replied Stocking, grandiloquently. "I will join, whatever the risk."

"No, he fears no mortal foe," Glimson muttered, *sotto voce*—"but he fears the night dews, the night shades, the goblins, and the ghosts."

"I am going to the *Half Hour* office at once," said Ingleton.

"I will accompany you," said Glimson and Bligow together.

"I should have much pleasure in doing the same, but am engaged for the present," said Stocking.

The three friends departed, Stocking remaining in the room.

Antony rose, and approaching Stocking, peered full in his face.

Stocking closed his eyes, but did not otherwise notice Antony, who stepped back, still looking at him. Stocking bit his lips until they were white; then he opened his eyes to their fullest extent, and faced Antony, who stood immovable. A malignant

look was on Stocking's face; his fingers twitched; and he raised his hands as though he wanted to grasp Antony's throat.

The will was there, but he dared not. In the first place—he was seated, and Antony was standing. Secondly—Antony, as he thought, was stronger than he; thirdly—he might be arrested if he injured or killed him.

The look of malice grew in intensity. Were he imprisoned he could not wreak vengeance on Ingleton. All this Stocking weighed in his mind, while his fingers were nervously twitching.

At last Antony turned his back on him and left the room.

Stocking breathed a sigh of relief; he gnashed his teeth, and muttered—"I shall have to remove Antony first"—he spat on the floor as he uttered this name. "Vile, despicable creature; disgusting fellow; you shall not thwart me—you, of all men the vilest."

He left the room, and in the corridor he met Mr. Slowun, who was "shuffling off for a coffee swill." So said Thompson, whom it would be unwise to doubt.

Mr. Slowun invited Stocking to come and have a cup of coffee.

To this Stocking agreed, to the great joy of Thompson; who straightway gave vent to his feelings by one of his pet war dances.

On their way to the establishment where was

dispensed the mild soothing cup of coffee, Stocking conveyed to Mr. Slowun as much as he thought fit concerning his transactions with Ingleton. Not having to exert himself in the matter, a proceeding which at any time he highly disparaged, the presiding genius of the "Alliance" approved of Stocking's work.

It may be remarked—and we have the authority of Thompson for saying so—that Mr. Slowun had been born old. Thompson stated—and his evidence was unimpeachable—that Mr. Slowun had come into the world with that dirty grey beard; that he had never been young; that he had never played a game even in the remote days of his quondam boyhood; that he never had missed a day from his office; had never been ill for a single hour within the memory of any of the officials.

Thompson was wont to say—"Can you imagine such a man to have ever played at leap frog?" and if you ventured to assert that it might have been possible, Thompson would declare the idea preposterous. He would say—"Such an agglomeration of possibilities as could cause Mr. Slowun to exert his intuitive faculties, or exercise his muscles beyond a shuffle, entirely exceeded his power of conception."

Having consulted this authority we may return to Stocking. Stocking was speaking very softly: "He has fallen into my trap; he has written to the *Half Hour*, and cannot retract now."

Mr. Slowun immediately turned round, shuffled back, and returned again to Stocking, who took no notice of this little performance, which was repeated several times at intervals of a few minutes.

"I want your assistance," said Stocking, on Mr. Slowun's return.

"I cannot do it, you know; it may compromise my position," answered Mr. Slowun, in his own vacillating, nerveless way.

"Oh! it will not implicate you," said Stocking, angrily.

"Don't get out of temper now, my child," whined Mr. Slowun. "What is it? Bother it! Bother it!"

"It will do you good, because it will show that you take great interest in the 'Alliance,' and are faithful to the State," said Stocking.

"You know I never like to injure anyone . . . . What do you want?" said Mr. Slowun.

"Well, Ingleton has replaced his notice, and that of Glimson's. Now you must give notice to the Senate of Ingleton's intention, and if he persists he must be incarcerated together with his accomplices," said Stocking.

"I would not injure anyone," said Mr. Slowun; "but peace must be kept at any cost. But why, where, does he injure the State?" asked Mr. Slowun, vaguely.

Further conversation was stopped by their arrival at the Cretonian.

* * * * *

The prismatic contents sheet of the *Half Hour* exhibited, amongst other notices, the following :—

"A LETTER FROM MR. J. INGLETON."

Hundreds stopped at places where these sheets were exhibited, and looked amazed. "A letter ! a letter !" could be heard passing from lip to lip. It was a strange event, for letters appeared only on the rarest occasions, the newspaper being almost exclusively the mouthpiece of those in power, who did not go out of their way at any time to court correspondence ; and that especial notice of such correspondence should appear on the contents bill naturally increased the public curiosity.

Those who were weather-wise began predicting, and like the oracles of Greece, were very mysterious, giving vent for the most part to such expressions as—"There is something up," &c.

Now as there could be doubt of this, they looked profoundly wise after having given forth these bits of philosophic reasoning. But many hurried homewards, or to such places where the *Half Hour* was obtainable, and read the letter.

From that moment a strange word began to hover on many lips. Those who had known other times could be seen shaking their heads, and old cronies gathered together to recall former days. To these the word *Individualism* had a meaning—they knew its sense.

But to the members of the Alliance, who were most interested in this subject, because a fellow

member had written this letter, it sounded strange; it might have been culled from a foreign tongue, so little did they seem to grasp it; and why anyone should oppose a debate on a subject entirely new to them—they found it difficult to understand. The later editions of the *Half Hour* were eagerly perused, but contained no news. Those, however, who could read between the lines took particular note of the following mysteriously worded paragraph in the paper :—

"A voice has been heard, but the ships that brought the news spoke the signs wrongly. The priests were mystified, and said the oracle was silent. But the oracle spoke, and in plain language ; nor could the priests disguise its meaning, for it was plain to all. The oracle will be silenced amid the roar of the tempest, and the wind will blow from the north and utterly suffocate his voice."

CHAPTER X.

It is strange how readily people take up a matter of which they were perfectly ignorant a moment before.

Mark Glimson was seated at his ease in his room. Near him, on a table, lay three open books and a pile of manuscript. Glimson had been writing, but had removed his chair from the table nearer to the stool, and was swinging his arms while he uttered these words—

"Last night, not a man but was speaking about Ingleton's letter, and the ridiculous nonsense heard everywhere was enough to make a man swear."

Glimson rose, pressed a button, and an incandescent reading lamp gave light. "Much blessed London," said he, reseating himself: "City of inveterate mists and general foe to the lungs of its inhabitants, at least of such as are unfortunate enough to live on the outskirts. The fog is above now and around.

"Those air pumps are magnificent—keeping that mist away. The perfected state has not arrived yet, nor will it be till England shall be free from mist. Oh! the mist suits the time; the mist hides the blue vault of Heaven, and the policy of the rulers

hides the truth from the people. Beautiful! Well, there are those who take advantage of the mist, but I cannot, worse luck." He swung his arms, and then ran his fingers through his hair.

"Hallo! who the dickens is that?" he said, as he heard a sharp ring at the bell.

A moment later a man entered. He was dressed in the uniform of the State. In appearance he resembled a boiled lobster, with garnish of carrots—he having a tough, red, scrubby beard and hair to match. "Man—Mark Glimson," he said, in an extraordinarily gruff voice, as he produced a blue-folded sheet.

"I am he," said Glimson, eyeing the fellow as though he were a curiosity.

"By order," said the man, as he handed Glimson the paper.

"With my most sincere thanks," said Glimson, accepting the paper.

The man turned on his heels and walked towards the door.

"Hi! put a mask upon your face; don a slouched hat and a Spanish cloak, and you would make a splendid representative of the Inquisition," said Glimson.

The man looked at Glimson and turned again.

"Hi! a suit of mediæval clothes, a knife, and six inches of string, and you are an emissary of the Vehmgericht," said Glimson.

The man scowled.

"You would make an ideal representative of a Chambre Noire, the Mafia of Italy, or the Fenians of Ireland. Good morning!" concluded Glimson.

The man scowled again, and went out.

Glimson unfolded the paper in a most leisurely way, and glanced at it. "Hallo! what is this? Beautiful! Circle at the head: symbol of the unity of the nation. Sometimes this circle means nought, as in arithmetic occasionally. 'Mark Glimson is requested to appear without fail, at the Hall of Justice, this day at eleven o'clock in the forenoon precisely, before the Senator Judge on the *rota*. By order! You are to bring this paper with you.'

"Now that last line is really ingenious," remarked Glimson to himself. "If any man can make head or tail of this, I'll eat my head. Blue paper—official. Sent by a man who does not speak half a dozen words, and utters those as though he were an automatic machine. Mysterious! Beautiful! I suppose it is about the debate. Eleven o'clock in the forenoon; that is a miserable time to summon a fellow before the high and mighty. No precedent. Ah! Yes! I think Charles the First appeared at that time before the Court which decreed his execution before they tried him. Beautiful! I don't feel at all as if I am going to have my head chopped off. Besides, they would puff me away—they could do it—to preserve the peace and prevent danger. Only let them try it, it will require more than one puff. I wonder if they have summoned Ingleton? No doubt,

my puissant masters, I shall have the pleasure of your acquaintance before long. You preserve many things and discard others. You wear a robe of red—significant of justice, tempered with blood; I think a robe of white—purity—would suit you better. And, oh! for a wig, too; I should like to see you arrayed in a wig with curls and powder, like the one in the glass case at the museum. What buffoons these people must have been who were judged by such zanies. We are no better. Hallo! it is time I went to present myself—'By order.'"

The Hall of Justice was situated in the centre of an immense square, having four different entrances which were always open, so that the central corridor was an everlasting prey to draughts; but then the architect who designed the building did not trouble himself about such trifles as draughts. What were draughts?

Nothing, when compared to the working out of an elaborate design. If you do not like the draughts then shut those massive doors studded with nobs. We have wandered, and have entered before looking round to examine the exterior. If you are a stranger in London, a guide, kindly provided by the Government, will escort you round, and point his stick as he goes along at the show places.

He usually begins on the south side, where a monumental stone, fixed in the wall, records the following fact:—

"The hall of Justice is built in the Victorian

style as designed and approved by the Convention in the year VII."

Now, supposing your knowledge of architecture to be limited, you immediately look wise and admire the Victorian style, especially when the guide points out the special points in connection with it. If you have no guide with you, and you have ascended the flight of steps and passed those knobby-faced oak portals, and then through enormous glass swing doors, and after that another set of doors, your first impression will be that it is draughty, that it is dark, and that the tesselated pavement is noisy. Moreover, that slab of black alternated by white marble, reminds you of a chess board. Again, if you looked upwards you would see that it was darker there, and that the friezes of the ceiling and the carving of the Corinthian columns would eventually prove a grand nesting place for dust and cobwebs.

Among those other notions that will get into your head, as the doors at the end suddenly swing open, and you are almost chilled to the bone by the opposing currents of air, is the question why there was such an enormous space around you. Why men should be coming to and fro in the simmerian darkness of the basement. That draught from below might even put it in your head that justice was being manufactured in those caves under the flooring on which you stood; or, perhaps, the kerchief wherewith open-handed justice was blindfolded, was spun there; or the evenly-balanced scales

taken down and cleaned occasionally, or a fresh edge put upon the sword.

For to your unguided mind it might seem foolish to have underground rooms, when there was so much room above. But never enter a building without a guide, it is unwise, and above all, eccentric.

Here then arrived Mark Glimson at a quarter to the eleventh hour.

As he ascended the steps, he was muttering to himself,—"The Victorian style is very good; chief characteristics—a medley of all the styles from the Corinthian to the Tudor, with a dash of the Moorish thrown in. Beautiful! A wing of this, and a wing of that, cut short; very elegant, especially those sugar cones which surmount it all. Beautiful!" He passed through those swing doors to the hall, as the clock gave the quarter. This clock did not bawl like other clocks. It had more sense, it spoke in an almost subdued tone, and its ticking was very quiet, for even a clock knows how to behave itself when in a Hall of Justice. In the hall, Glimson saw a man in a peculiar garb, whom he immediately recognised as his visitor of the morning. Not knowing where to go, he stepped up to this person, who was pacing the pavement, in an automatic manner.

"Where am I to go?" said Glimson to him.

"Your papers," said the gruff voice in as sepulchral a tone as it was possible to adopt.

Glimson produced the blue note for inspection.

The man looked at it, and the gruff voice said, "Arraigned."

"Who is arraigned?" said Glimson.

"You," said the gruff voice.

"Well, you are cleverer than I," said Glimson, I could not make anything of it."

"Basement. Room 3," said the gruff voice.

"Is that where I have to appear?" said Glimson.

"Yes."

"That is very uninviting," said Glimson; "am I to be buried before my death?"

"That's it," said the official, pointing his finger to the descending stairs.

Glimson crossed the hall, and descended the stairs, muttering—"*Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate*—Arraigned I enter the bowels of the earth."

At the end of the steps was a long corridor. Glimson looked round for room 3. Where is it? . . . . "Hallo, you here!"—(to a young man with a large volume on his shoulder, who stopped)—"Where is the 'arraigned' cavern?"

"Room 3, round the corner; that is where arraigned cases are heard;" and he went on.

Glimson passed on, turned the corridor, when he found himself face to face with room number 3.—"Now for the Senator on the rota." He entered, but was stopped by a man in similar dress to the red-faced janitor on the upper floor.

"Another member of the Inquistion," said Glimson, sotto voce. Then he asked, "Am I right?" and handed over the blue paper.

"Yes," was the answer, and Glimson surveyed the room.

Except for the man at the door, and a Secretary who was writing, it was empty. At the further side, behind the man writing, was a high desk, with three steps on each side. Behind it stood a statue of Justice, above it a suspended sword. In front was a minature tribune, to which Glimson was directed by the door-keeper. From this elevation he surveyed the room critically.

"So that is the Secretary. Justice take that kerchief off; you have been blind long enough. That sword should be a poniard, for it has often stabbed those who have appeared before it."

Further reflection was interrupted by the appearance of a man behind the desk, and Glimson beheld the patrician features of Mr. Bostwell, who seated himself after bowing to the walls.

Mr. Bostwell, the Senator on the rota, examined a pile of papers on his desk before opening the proceedings, it being universally understood that the Judge knows not his work before he enters Court.

Having duly examined his file he said, "Mr. Secretary, be pleased to take down in writing the matter before us."

Mr. Secretary took a fresh sheet of paper, and a fresh pen. Addressing Glimson, "Your name."

"Mark Glimson," was the answer.

"Your profession?" said the Senator.

"A member of the Alliance," answered Glimson.

"You know why you are arraigned before this court. What do you propose?" asked the Senator.

"I do not know what I have been arraigned for. Information on that subject would be desirable," said Glimson, quizzingly.

"Order in court," said the usher.

"I did not know it was noisy," muttered Glimson.

"You are charged with intent to disturb the peace," said the Senator, looking hard at his desk.

"Oh!" exclaimed Glimson; "am I permitted to ask wherein I have attempted to do so?"

"You intend to debate on a subject which you entitle 'Individualism,'" said the Senator.

"It takes two to debate," answered Glimson. Under his breath he added—"Now about Ingleton."

"The charge runs—'That you intend to assist, in company with another,'" said the Senator.

"I do not deny it," answered Glimson.

"You *may* not," said the Senator harshly, still intent on the woodwork of the desk.

"On what grounds?" asked Glimson.

"You know the law," said the Senator sternly.

"I am not an advocate; how should I know the law?" said Glimson.

"You are supposed to," said the Senator.

"Ah! mere supposition," said Glimson.

"Order in court," cried the usher.

Glimson intended to continue this fencing as long as possible, in the hope of hearing from or about Ingleton, for he felt sure that he had already appeared.

"By law II. of the year III. the Senate may determine to take any course to maintain the peace," said the Senator, slowly.

Glimson paused for a moment. "By that law the Senate could justify itself if it took the severest possible course," he said.

"Decidedly," answered the Senator.

"Then I shall take the first opportunity of petitioning against the law," said Glimson.

The Senator smiled. "You have other matters on hand, and had better attend to them," he said.

"Oh! all in good time," said Glimson.

"Will you undertake not to hold this debate?" said the Senator.

For a moment Glimson was nonplussed by the directness of the question. At length he answered: "It takes two to form a debate at the very least."

"You do not expect extraneous aid?" asked the Senator.

"From what do you infer that?" asked Glimson, looking round at the door.

"Will you give the undertaking?" repeated the Senator.

Oh, for time—to gain time, that was all. A bright idea struck him. He would lead the judge

astray. "Why is the Government opposed to a debate?" he asked.

"The Government does not oppose *a* debate," said the Senator.

"Then why am I here?" asked Glimson.

"They oppose the subject," answered the Senator.

"Then I will call it 'Personality,'" said Glimson.

"The name does not change the subject," said the Senator, amused at the parry.

"More fencing," muttered Glimson. "How would Collectivism do?" he asked.

"Not at all," said the Senator.

"Why not?" asked Glimson.

"Because in the debate you would oppose the idea, and your opponent might defend it too weakly," said the Senator, looking up, wondering what would come next.

"Foiled again," murmured Glimson, looking round at the door. Would no message come?

"But would opposition to Collectivism — but a name—a very abstruse subject—be injurious?" he asked, after a long pause.

It was now the Senator's turn to be nonplussed. What could he say to this question? Glimson watched him closely. "He dare not answer me; he understands us perfectly," he muttered.

"Will you give the undertaking—'Yes' or 'no'?" said the Senator, harshly.

"I cannot," answered Glimson, confusedly. "It

takes more than one to debate—I must consult others before I can give an undertaking." Under his breath he said—"Now it's out."

"You are answerable for yourself alone," said the Senator.

"I must consult," said Glimson.

"You cannot," said the Senator.

"That is arbitrary," said Glimson; and to himself—"I am boxed, and in the dungeon already."

"Your answer," said the Senator.

Glimson looked round at the door, but remained silent.

"Your answer!" said the Senator again.

Glimson kept silent. He knit his brows. To refuse was nothing, but would that compromise Ingleton?

"I require an hour for consideration," he said.

"You can have it," said the Senator, and he immediately disappeared.

The usher walked to the desk, collected the papers, and followed suit.

The secretary folded his papers and rose. He beckoned to Glimson—"Enter that room," he said.

Suddenly part of the wall gave way, revealing a small room.

Glimson entered. "Ah! is this a foretaste of what is to come? Well, it is time that this state of things were altered."

He paced the room, which did not allow of more

than three steps either way. Seeing a chair, he sat down and began swinging his arms very rapidly.

"Bostwell is of our way of thinking, but he dare not show it," he said. "Ingleton, why don't you let me know? Perhaps he has not been up yet."

An hour passed by.

At length the door opened, and Glimson stepped out and ascended the tribune, on which he found a scrap of paper. He examined it closely. "Sure it was not there before." He turned it over, and in minute characters he read—"Lecture, give undertaking.—J. I."

"Why, Ingleton has been here meanwhile, I see. I will give you the undertaking," to the Senator, who had reappeared at the desk.

Glimson signed the necessary papers, and was immediately ushered out much to his satisfaction.

"I never knew that secret rooms were included in Victorian architecture," he said, as he made his way out. "Why it is quite delightful to breathe the fresh air and see the daylight, even if it is foggy. I was in a fog just now. I must see Ingleton at once; but homeward first."

Hurrying along he noticed that in large letters appeared the words—"Mr. Ingleton and his lecture" on the *Half Hour* placards. Arriving home, he found the last edition of the *Half Hour* on his table, and glancing through it he read—"We are authoritatively informed that Mr. Ingleton has abandoned the idea of a debate on Individualism,

but will give a lecture on that subject on the date already published, under certain conditions."

"What are those conditions, I wonder? Well, now for Ingleton."

He again went out, and as he closed the street-door Antony touched him on the shoulder.

"Hallo!" said Glimson turning round.

"James Ingleton is at the Al-li-ance; he sent me," stammered Antony.

"Right, Antony," said Glimson, hurrying on, accompanied by Antony, who now and then gave vent to his thoughts by shouting "Hurrah for Merry England."

"Merry indeed, after what I have passed through," said Glimson.

* * * * *

In the every-day phraseology of those who supported by word, or those who supported by action, the social status of which this period was the ideal, is to be found the term, "The duty of mankind." Like all such phrases its application is purely personal, and generally it is summed up in the self-satisfied idea: I take my share of the duty to mankind, that is, to *myself*. As a generic term, it suffices for its purpose. It is telling, for it imports little, and is good in its relation to others; whom you know owe mankind a little, and *do such* a little of that duty. Do not they, who prate about this duty, who are ever conjuring with a host of words to that effect, do not they owe their share in this duty?

Have they fulfilled their allotted task, or are not they contravening the quintessence of that duty to mankind, when bellowing it down the throats of thousands, to the detriment of all good, and the triumph of evil? Is this duty to mankind? There are those who think that they fulfil their share of the obligation of life, which includes so many duties and cares, by preaching the regeneration of man. These are dreamers, to whom inevitably comes a rough awakening. If the human race were really imbued with such a pure, lofty spirit, both preachers and audience might say they fulfilled their duty to mankind. But is it—does the race aspire to these heights, or does it love to grovel in the dust, besmirched with its own hyprocrisy? Hence the rude awakening for those of high aspirations. They reckoned with them in their theories. An hypothesis to them was equal to an axiom. For centuries have rolled on, and while the banner of progress has waived aloft, the civilization that has been born, and gone on increasing, is but veneer after all. Calculate not upon man fulfilling his duties to mankind, for may be he is but an evil monster. How rude is this awakening from a pleasant dream! How bitter to find the reality, and to see that man still has ambitions, evil dispositions, sordid thoughts, greed for its own sake, not solely for the comforts it can bring.

Man will fulfil his duty to man, only so long as he can make that duty agree with his own selfishness,

only when it takes a position well in the rear of his ambition, wants and necessities. All this too despite the ceaseless preaching of equality and fraternity.

An hydra-headed monster stops the path, with greed, ambition, lust, envy, hatred, chief among its hideous writhing heads. Destroy, crush them, if you like, but in due time they will reappear, more hideous, more distorted than ever.

* * * * * * *

Pelham Stocking was in Mr. Slowun's room. The latter was lecturing him on the theme, that if a thing was worth doing, it was worth doing well, even if that thing be evil. "We all owe a duty to mankind, a duty we must fulfill at all costs. Those who oppose the fulfilment of this sacred duty deserve the greatest punishment the law can devise. I have passed my whole life in fulfilling this duty," so he spoke.

Stocking rose from his chair, not highly edified by this discourse, for he began pacing the room with uneasy strides.

"How have Ingleton and Glimson got on?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Mr. Slowun.

"But you *could* know," said Stocking, impatiently.

"Bother it! Yes, but I dare not," whined Mr. Slowun.

"Why not?" queried Stocking, still pacing the room.

"Because—because it might look bad," said Mr. Slowun.

"Bah! you would be doing your duty to mankind and the State," said Stocking, grimly.

"Bother it! bother!" muttered Mr. Slowun, as he cricked his neck for an upside down view of nothing in particular.

Thompson entered with the *Half Hour*, and immediately departed again.

"Well, it will be in here," said Mr. Slowun, looking at the newspaper upside down.

Stocking snatched it away, and looked through it eagerly. He found the paragraph and read it with care, and at length bit his lips, and muttering the word "foiled," hurriedly left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

THE evening of the lecture arrived at length. We say at length, for to the impatient and ever active prime movers, time crawled slowly. First they counted the days, then the hours, and then the minutes. Such is the weakness of man that he will, with careless scepticism, attempt to grasp eternity, and yet be impatient if he has to stand still for a few minutes.

Bligow has bestirred himself with a will, and his jovial presence seemed everywhere. Not that it required any force to awaken interest, for the blind, stupid interference of the Government had done that. Every member of the Alliance felt that he must attend that lecture, for was not the reputation of a member at stake?

Truly it required but a word, as Glimson said, to awaken the enthusiasm of thousands. The *Half Hour* had been read with an eagerness unknown since the first few years of the Convention, but except for a few obscure paragraphs it was silent on the subject.

The City Hall phono-chronometer had but bawled the sixth hour, and already the members were trooping in knots of twos and threes—talking, discussing the subject as they went; arranging the lecturer's

method, and showing its treatment to their admiring friends, who, knowing less than the speakers, and *that* was little enough, dared not dispute it. Here they came, tall and short, stout and thin, in all shapes and sizes. Stop for a moment and look at some of them.

Here is a thin, lank, young man, with jet black eyes, and a mouth which denotes determination. He is by himself, and stops not to talk with others, but walks straight on. Arthur Caland is his name.

Here is a group of three—Frederick Baxter, William Perkins, and John Burham—commonly known as the triumvirate. Baxter is dark-complexioned, and has a swarthy black beard and Roman nose. Perkins is sallow, and has arms which are longer than those of most men. Burham is short and stout.

But why enumerate them? As the minutes fly the corridor becomes congested, and the hall is rapidly filling. Whirr, whirr, go the wheels of the clock, and the sound of the quarter is heard, and still they enter.

But enter the hall as the hour strikes, how full it is, how animated; here they sit and there they stand—and here come James Ingleton, Mark Glimson, Henry Bligow, Pelham Stocking, Willie Heughin, and a few others. What a cheering, what a shouting. All this mysterious enthusiasm is kindled by the opposition made against the lecture. They seat themselves on a platform, upon which the

Half Hour apparatus is similar to that in the Hall of Antiquity.

Glimson rose amid a silence which had only been obtainable after a deal of preliminary coughing. He said:—

"Brothers of the Alliance—It is my duty to say that our brother, James Ingleton, will address you to-night on a subject which may seem strange to you. It would have been better if we had been allowed to debate on it, but we may not, and, therefore, must bow to the inevitable. Freedom of speech, the so-called right of Englishmen, is denied us by that grandmotherly institution—the Government. Conditions have been imposed upon the lecturer, which are absurd; but I am not the lecturer—he can speak for himself," and he sat down, ending abruptly.

Loud cheers followed this short speech.

Why had Glimson stopped so short—why? Because one of the conditions of the lecture was that nothing contrary to the Social State should be expressed. Hence his abruptness. He did not wish to come out strong, as Bligow said.

Ingleton got up amid fresh cheering, and thus addressed the audience:—

"Fellow citizens—Before I begin my lecture, I must tell you what, perhaps, some of you know, that the subject I have chosen was greatly opposed by the authorities, not systematically, not telling me that I would not be allowed to speak on Individ-

ualism; but hints, even threats, were thrown out, should I persist in speaking on a subject which it was thought, and rightly so, is opposed in many respects to the present Government; but my determination has carried me through, you see. So now for our subject. What is Individualism? What does it promote? These shall be the stand-points I shall take. What is Individualism?" Ingleton spoke in a manner as calm and collected, more so than even if he were addressing his own home circle, when speaking on such a topic. "Individuality is the birth-right of man, his greatest possession, the most precious treasure presented to him by his Maker. Individuality is man himself. The Creator, in His divine design, created thousands of species of animals—that is the individuality of species; and in every species are sub-divisions, and sub-divisions betraying the intention of a perpetuation of this system of individuality. Again, when every class is examined and every separate animal is made to pass a judging standard, each differs in points, in colour, with the other—that is the individuality of the body, exhibited to all to mark, note, and inwardly digest. But man is a higher creation. Man, we are told by the Bible, was last created; the evolutionist, starting from a different theory, arrived at the same conclusion. Man is God's most sublime creation; and in man individuality is most marked. The first factor in that individuality—which those who take least trouble to observe, are yet compelled to acknowledge,

so forcibly is it present—is personal appearance, the contour, the complexion, the lines, the type. Who has not noticed them? Who has not observed the lines of demarcation between man and man, between brother and brother, even between those who are each but a part of one—I refer to twins? But man has besides his body a mind, and in this may be observed above all, his individuality. For man, being superior to all other creatures, possesses more brain power than any other animal, therefore here his individuality shines. In every act, in every deed it is visible. In thought from the lowest to the highest; from the most debased to the most lofty, the personality of the man in his thought or actions is *ipso-facto* the best proof I can give of the existence of individuality. Every hour of our lives proves its power. Now this power has been the greatest factor in the world's history, from the creation to"—he stopped short, a dead silence ensued, during which Stocking was watching narrowly—"to within a short period of the present time. It has been the creative power, for having itself been a creation it ever copied itself. It was individuality that gave us the inventions which we so highly prize; it was individuality that gave us the genius of the painter and the novelist, the word power of the historian, the humour of the comedian. The individual right of man could be no more denied than the existence of the human race, for both are bound up within the other. How far-reaching its power is,

it is impossible to estimate. Truly it can be put to evil purposes; such, indeed, has been done, but that lessens not the fact of its greatness. It was the personality of a Moses that first gave a code of laws and morals to the human race. It was the individuality of an Alexander that swayed his world and made him feared, and all but worshipped. It was but a man who, by his personal self, evolved a religion that holds half the globe in prayer. Who could disprove this? Who can doubt this great force? Genius is the term applied to those members of the human race who possess this power in greater measure than their fellows, and no greater proof of the individuality of each person, in the great mass called humanity, comes to my mind than that this gift should show itself greater in one person than in another. What created the revolution in France but individuality displaying its requirements through its greatest possessors? The Hegelian idea of progress was a growth of human freedom, *ipso-facto* the enlargement of individuality. Progress was a factor of the same personality, which created the environment which made the past a potent power for future good. Individualism is the keystone upon which the human race was founded. Where can we not look for Individualism. In everything—in mankind, in race, in species, in nationality, and countries. Why did Germany give birth to philosophers and England to engineers? Why did France produce a galaxy of great men, and Italy artists of renown?

What was it that taught painting to the Dutch and sculpture to the Greeks? The individuality of the races. The inherited individual genius, multiplied continuously, produced the fruit. I could enlarge on the subject, but may not for fear of the darker side of the picture. What did, what does Individualism promote? It causes men to think and some to dream. It caused them to aspire to the loftiest heights the human mind can attain. It caused others to act, to do, to say that which roused the world from a torpid state, when the mind of man had fallen as low as the brute creation. Then, when hideous darkness, like a great pall, covered the world; then, when a word meant death; then, despite the enthralling venom of their dreary existence, men cried out, by word of mouth, by book, by pamphlets, and the cry raised by the individual mind grew into a roaring tempest which shook the world to its foundations. That was the strength of Individualism! That is what it did! But to refer to other matters. All the great deeds which caused a man to be honoured among his fellows were a result of individual thought. One man introduced steam power, another electricity. One man discovered the circulation of the blood, and another the law of gravitation. There was but one Shakespeare and one Dickens; one Mirabeau and one Voltaire. Each separately proves the power, the strength, of individual men. Each exhibits his personality in a different light—for such is the wondrous creation—Individ-

nalism. What a mighty host I could name to prove this truth. Bhudda and Mahomet, Cæsar and Napoleon, Washington and Garibaldi, Schiller and Hugo, Mozart and Meyerbeer, Burke and Chatham, Livingstone and Speake. Ha! they live yet—they exist in their mighty works; the personality of these men are the shades which we call history. The heathens appreciated the quality, they understood its worth, for they gave a personality to their gods. The wind, the rain, light, drink, each in turn formed a separate god to be worshipped. Look down into the depths of ages; glance back into that great past. How does the halo, the individuality, of Homer, Horace, and Virgil illumine the globe till this very day! How they rise through the mist of time. How highly would not a portrait of these men be esteemed, and why? Because of the acknowledgment of their personality. Man has a good disposition, and an evil one; in most one or the other predominates. That again proves his individuality. None can deny that this same Individualism has been put to evil courses, but what has not? Who could deny the beneficient powers of our personality because evil has been wrought through it?"——

Suddenly, to the amazement of all, a bell rang, and a part of the panelling behind Ingleton gave way, disclosing a loud trumpet telephone to the view.

"Stop!" shouted a voice in a stentorian tone.

Ingleton ceased speaking.

"Stop!" again called the voice, unearthly in its

loudness, and as if emanating from space.

The whole of the audience rose to its feet.

"Stop!" again called the voice.

On the face of Pelham Stocking there appeared a look of triumph. Glimson, ever ready of mind and action, went to the telephone, and shouted into the receiver (below the trumpet), "Who calls?"

The silence was overpowering as they all waited for the response. What could have so abruptly stopped the lecture?

"By order of the Senate!" came forth the answer in the same stentorian tones, to the great consternation of everyone.

The lecture had been allowed, the whole country knew of its taking place, and for it to be stopped—stopped in its very course, seemed a strange proceeding.

Glimson was sorely perplexed, and so were Ingleton and Bligow. Not a word had been uttered which could have given offence. Not a word in derision of the Collectivism, which the subject opposed.

Yet, "By order of the Senate," it was stopped.

Glimson again went to the receiver, having first whispered to Ingleton, "Perhaps it was a hoax." He shouted down," Who represents the Senate?"

"I, Frank Hedgeco, secretary, have received orders to stop the lecture of James Ingleton," shouted the voice, sounding quite uncanny in the stillness.

Still disbelieving, Glimson said, "I will go to the kinteograph—show yourself and your order." He crossed over to where that apparatus stood, and turned its tap full on. All heads were eagerly stretched to the small screen, on which suddenly appeared the features of an old man, with bushy eyebrows, a hard mouth, and little comical eyes and short whiskers.

"That is he, right enough," said Glimson gloomily.

The screen for a moment had a subdued tint, and then followed, in black letters, a document, which in the strong relief was visible in most parts of the hall.

"There can be no doubt of it," said Glimson, as he narrowly examined the wording. "Confound that act of the Convention!" and he turned the tap off. The kinteograph was once more in darkness.

Stocking rose from his seat, and speaking to Ingleton in a very low tone, so low that but few heard him, he said, "You must go on; it is imperative that you take advantage of this opportunity—go on!" and then he reseated himself.

Glimson turned to the audience. "You have heard the order—to disobey is treason. It is our duty to obey," he said.

Ingleton, who was still standing, said, "Friends, I am in your hands. If you say go on, I will do so; if you decide that the government must be obeyed, I will follow suit. Let me know your opinion."

Bligow rose from his seat and said, "Friends, let the good sense of the meeting show itself, and let the lecture be discontinued. Now is not the time to brave the danger."

All were on their feet now, but no one spoke.

Arthur Caland jumped upon his seat and shouted, "Let us do our duty, let the lecture cease." And then a wild shout arose—"Yes! Yes!" and "Go on! go on!" amid the waving of hands and the stamping of feet, but the "ayes" won it.

The look of triumph disappeared from Stocking's face, and was replaced by a fierce expression. His face was haggard and pale, but his eyes gleamed in horrible contrast.

Glimson observed it, and then muttered, "Do we owe this to you?" and going to the receiver, spoke down it: "The lecture will be discontinued. Are you satisfied?" and amid a great silence came the answer "Yes," and the panel reclosed itself.

"Three cheers for Ingleton," shouted Arthur Caland, and three great cheers were given, sounds which had not been heard for nigh a quarter of a century.

"Bravo! bravo!" They were repeated, and would have been continued, but Ingleton stayed them.

"I thank you for your kindness; I will treasure it to the end of my life," he said, and sat down.

Glimson again came to the front of the platform.

"Time, friends; I ask for time," he said, and retreated to the end of the platform.

Caland, still on his seat, shouted, "Home! go home!" and he got down.

A peculiar scene now presented itself. Hundreds went out, but amid deepest silence. Many approached the platform, and shook hands with Ingleton and Glimson. Last of all came Caland, coat buttoned up and head erect. He took great strides, and mounted the platform, and addressing Ingleton and Glimson, said, "The time is not yet ripe." Then he immediately departed in the same manner as he had come.

Stocking was still seated in moody, sullen silence. He bit his lips, then uttered the words, "Foiled, foiled."

The moon shone bright, and the stars twinkled merrily above. The hall was empty; all had gone home. What was to be done?

Bligow walked home with Ingleton and Glimson.

"They are stirred," said the former.

"They are, in spite of all," said Gimson.

"I think so too," said Ingleton; and they shook hands heartily, and went home to meditate, and plan for the future.

Half uttered speech; uncompleted lecture! What has it effected? Was the peaceful mind disturbed in this ideal state? Was the object of Ingleton attained to any extent?

Had Glimson judged rightly, or was the enthusiasm a quality which the morning sun would disperse like a mist? They who read know the results.

Stocking walked home. "Baffled! Baffled!" he muttered. "Baffled, when I could have staked my existence on the results. Baffled! foiled! and I thought he would now be approaching his end. Bah! I shall not give in. I *must* not—if I had but dared I might have ended it there and then."

A shadow was following him—a shadow which stopped when he paused for a moment to beat his breast in vexation—a shadow which moved when he moved. That shadow and his own mingled with each other. Still he walked on, puzzled how to act. "I have it," he muttered suddenly. . . . The shadow came face to face with him. . . . It was Antony.

* * * *

It is a fallacy common to all, that night means sleep, and sweet repose to everything.

Listen! the dogs are howling in the stillness. The cocks crow from their roosts and foretell the change of weather. Does the night sleep? The darkness is watching. The shadows are so many spies that wend their way stealthily and silently. The wind is lifting its voice. Does the night sleep? No! Nature is awake. The clouds gather, the stars twinkle, and occasionally are seen taking flight into space. The moon crosses the path allotted to her course. The tides come and go, and the billows heave one over the other. The trees whisper in the wind, and plants and flowers sigh an answer. Who

says the night sleeps! when the watchers of the night do their sentry duty.

Pelham Stocking slept, and dreamed. He beheld a great open space. Ingleton, Glimson, and Bligow were there—("Ha! ha!" he shrieked in his sleep)—they were being led to execution. He saw it, and triumphed. He laughed in his sleep. The scene changed, and the beads of perspiration gathered on his forehead. He moved in violent contortions in his bed. He was on a precipice. He slipped, and fell. He was falling . . . falling on to the jagged rocks below. He shrieked in his agony. No help! He was falling, and he felt the concussion as he struck the rocks. His brain whirled, and the blood oozed from his head. He was dying, and there was none to save him.

He sprang up and knocked his head against the woodwork of the bed. He awoke from the shock, and breathed a sigh of relief. The moon's rays entered the room through a crevice in the shutters. Who said the night slept?

He fell asleep again . . . and on his ears fell the strains of sweet music, which threw him into an ecstacy of delight, so beautiful it was—it rose and fell in ever changing cadences. Turning suddenly he found himself in the presence of a snake charmer. The music rolled more pleasantly on, and soft aromatic breezes fanned his cheeks. Ah! the girl was gone. He was alone with a huge python, which magnetized him to the spot. It raised its head and

spat at him. Ah! it came towards him. . . . He felt it twisting itself around his legs. The music was again wild and weird, but it played faster. The serpent had reached his wrists; he felt his muscles contract, and knew he was powerless. Faster, faster, went the music . . . . He felt the cold clammy folds around his throat. The coils tightened. He knew his end had come; he yielded himself up as the music rose with a final burst, and died away.

After a time he awoke. The perspiration, cold and dank upon him. He had swooned, and found that he had nearly throttled himself with his coverlet. He gasped for breath, and loosened its folds. He was nervous, and shook with terror. He sprang from his bed, and opened the shutters. The wind was moaning; the moon lower on the horizon, but invisible. Yet through two breaks in the clouds its rays descended to earth and fell upon him. He turned away sharply, shaking as though he had the ague.

CHAPTER XII.

"How did you like the lecture?" said the basso of little Burham.

"The half lecture you mean?" said Perkins in a thin piping voice.

"Stopped in the middle," said Frederick Baxter.

The triumvirate were in their workshop. They were all three engineers, and worked in the same room.

The engineers' room was well lighted and lofty. Three lathes were at work: two smaller, and one larger and heavier in build—a screw cutter. Below them were three funnels, which received the filings and cuttings as they came from the work which was being turned. The chisels working very smoothly; their filings fell in a trough below the flooring; and every now and then the heavy sound of pneumatic pressure, told that the filings were being forced in the melting furnace.

"It was very rambling," said Perkins, walking to a gauge-meter, which told him how far the work had progressed. "Another five minutes finishes this piece," he said, after having examined the meter.

"Yes, no doubt," said Burham, "it was rambling."

"Well, he never had any notes," said Baxter.

"It was difficult to speak in a negative sense only," said Burham.

"Freddy, what do you think that lecture was intended for?" said Perkins.

"Ah! now, Fred, here is a poser for you," said Burham.

"It had a meaning," said Freddy quietly.

"No doubt about it," said Perkins.

"Well, now, what do you take that meaning to be?" said Burham, winking at Perkins.

"Wait a moment," said Baxter, as he went to the lathe on which a screw was turning. "It looks well, does it not," he said, as he examined the revolving metal. He glanced at the gauge-meter and calculated aloud. "Three feet thirty six inches to do. Let me see—two one-and-a-half done; took twenty minutes and a half—three to the inch, take another thirty minutes." What's the pressure, Will?"

"Twenty two," answered Will.

"That's about six thousand five hundred, eh!"

"Yes," answered Will.

"Well, then my chisel is blunt," said Baxter, still watching the revolution of the lathe.

"No one said it was not," said Burham laughing.

"The return current is high enough," said Perkins.

"They get as much electricity back as is necessary to drive the lathes, I believe," said Baxter slowly.

The ringing of a bell caused Perkins to return to

his lathe. His piece of work was finished. He pressed a treadle, and the pulley raised itself, releasing the pressure of the band, which fell on a loose pulley; and loosening the head stock, he took his work out, and laying it down said, "I have done."

"Well, now, Freddy, about the lecture," said Burham.

"Oh, you heard it," said Fred.

"Never said I did not," returned Burham.

"Then what do you think of it?" said Perkins.

"What would you have me think of it?" said Fred.

"What *do* you think of it? that is the question," said Perkins.

"That it was a strange subject," returned Fred.

"News, news!" said Burham derisively.

"Well, you have found something out—*you* have," added Perkins.

"It was a good subject," said Fred slowly.

"I think so too," said Perkins, quizzically.

"It was a strong subject," said Fred, slowly and with deliberation. "It had an object," said Fred in the same thoughtful manner, stroking his beard.

"That is evident, for it was stopped by order," said Burham.

"Now, why did the Convention stop it?" said Baxter, still stroking his beard.

"Question! question!" shouted Perkins, crossing the room.

"Because it was opposed to the Senate," said Baxter.

"In what sense?" queried Burham.

"It opposed Collectivism," said Baxter thoughtfully.

"The spirit of the Senate," rejoined Burham.

"Yes," answered Baxter, then went to the gauge meter. "Another three minutes," he observed.

Arthur Caland entered the room with long strides. "Another impost!" he exclaimed, dropping the newspaper he held in his hand.

"Eh!" said the three together.

"Your next year's credit card will be reduced by two per cent, that's all," replied Caland.

"Whew!" the triumvirate whistled together.

"A special meeting of the Convention has declared it," rejoined Caland, picking up his newspaper.

"The trio whistled again.

"What is the reason?" asked Baxter.

"None stated," replied Caland, handing him the newspaper.

Only Perkins and Burham whistled this time.

Baxter, looking at the guage-meter, released the band of his lathe, and returned to where the others were standing. Caland walked up and down, while the three immediately began to look over the newspaper.

Suddenly a door opened, and a man of medium stature entered the factory. His countenance was adorned with two pimples on each cheek, and three on his nose. His hair was of a dull brown colour,

very coarse and much dishevelled. He wore a short apron.

"What does this mean?" he said sternly to the others.

"What does *that* mean?" asked Caland quietly.

"Is this your room?" said the man, who was an overseer, and by name John Burrows, to Caland.

"No!" answered Caland.

"What do you mean by being here then?" said Burrows angrily.

"Nothing!" answered Caland.

"Nothing! Nothing! that is no answer," said the overseer.

"Well, you will have to look out for a better one," said Caland.

"This is insubordination, do you know that? Do you know what that means?" said Burrows white with passion.

"It little matters to me, very little indeed, seeing how we are. I mean, *I am* always at the beck and call of others. You can please yourself," said Caland, picking up the paper which the others had dropped when the overseer came in; and going to the door said, "I don't care," and then went out.

"You have not heard the end of this yet," said the overseer, looking after him. "You puppy, with your airs, you shall have a surprise."

Turning to the others he said, "What are you doing, eh! Is this work, reading a paper?"

"I have finished," said Perkins, pointing to his work.

"So have I," said Baxter.

"Mine will be finished in ten minutes," said Burham.

"None of your impertinent answers," said Burrows, still angry.

"Who is impertinent?" said Perkins, lifting his long arms.

"Don't go and ape that puppy of a Caland," said Burrows, cooling down a little.

"I do not ape anyone, and if I did it would be my own concern," said Perkins, dropping his arms.

"If you have finished, why didn't you send your work up?" said Burrows, turning to Baxter.

"Oh, there is no hurry," said Baxter, with indifference.

"Hurry or no hurry, you send it up," rejoined Burrows, retreating to the open door, which he pulled after him with a slam.

The trio whistled—this was their common method of letting off steam, or giving vent to their surprise.

"Well, of all the humbugs," said Baxter to his friends, "he is the worst."

"He showed his teeth, did he not," said Perkins reflectively.

"He always grumbles," said Burham, walking to his guage-meter, and then to his lathe, from which he released the band. The lathe stopped, and he undid the stock, from which he took the tool and

replaced it by a file. He then screwed the stock down again, and refixing the band went away.

The screeching of the file prevented all conversation for some minutes. Meanwhile, the others, going to their respective lathes, took their work, and opening the door of an elevator, placed the work in, shut the door and rang the bell. The filing finished, Burham took his work out, and repeated the action of the others. Quiet restored, the conversation began again.

"Now he can go and eat his head if he likes," said Burham, referring to the overseer.

"I say, they will make it hot for Caland," said Baxter.

"He is not afraid. I do not blame him. We are like a lot of slaves, we must not stand talking when there is next to nothing to do. That's nice," said Perkins.

"Collectivism or no Collectivism, I won't put up with it," said Perkins, lifting his hand and bringing it down on the bench.

"Bravo!" said Caland, re-entering the room.

"What do you think of last night's lecture," said Burham, turning to Caland.

"A move in the right direction," said Caland sharply.

"You take its object to be——?" said Perkins.

"To show the evils of Collectivism," retorted Caland.

"The——?" said Baxter.

"To establish the right of Individuality," continued Caland.

"Hear! hear!" shouted the three.

"Here is a later edition of the *Half Hour*," said Caland after a pause.

"Is the reason of the impost given," said Perkins.

"Yes!" said Caland, opening the paper which he produced from his pocket.

"What is it?" queried Burham.

"That the supply is greater than the demand. There is no work for thousands, and two years of famine have diminished the resources of the treasury. Foreign lands will not take our surplus goods. There are great stores of manufactured goods that cannot be got rid of; and that, therefore, they must reduce our incomes to balance the national exchequer," said Caland.

"How has that come to pass?" asked Burham.

"Through the loss of our Individuality, the State being the national provider and feeder. Also, because work being done at such high speed, the supply must exceed the demand if anything like constant work is to be provided. That, again, the loss of our individuality causes us to stop at a certain pace, and that many luxuries have been thrown into disuse, the turning out of which formerly employed thousands. Therefore the Senate employs but a few, and in order to find work for all, is obliged to lessen the allowance of each," said Caland.

"Was not this a factor to be dealt with at all

times, and under all systems of governments?" said Perkins.

The ringing of a bell put a stop to further conversation, for it warned the men to leave the factory without delay.

"Meet me this evening at the Alliance, and we will talk it over," said Caland, hurrying to get his outer garments.

* * * *

The rays of the setting sun glinted on the house tops, the spires and façades of the great buildings, and that conglomeration of streets called London. The golden light lit up the clouds with a thousand beauteous tints. The reflection shone on the windows and on the waters, laughing and dancing as it slowly died away to give place to mystic night. Glimson, seated in his room in the semi-obscurity, swung his arms for the hundreth time that afternoon. "Well, Ingleton is more resolute than even I thought he would be—'stick to it till death,' he said. Well, I shall not forsake him. That impost will materially assist us I am sure. Now, my fine fellow, you will have to look alive or——"

He paused, and ran his fingers through his hair. "Yes, a good conceit. You stopped our lecture, and we will stop you. As a certain Roman said, 'the universe is transformation. Life—is opinion.' My opinions are very decided; as for the transformation —I think that is just what you need above all things. As that same Roman said, 'always run the short way,

for the short way is the natural one.' Why should we think much of a man who said that? It is not very wonderful after all! Well, I am going to the Alliance, and shall go the shortest way; but I do not infer from that, that it will not lead to danger; may be the other way is more likely to.

"Heigho! I must see what they are doing in there, and see how I can effect our cause in any way. Messieurs, the government—everything—is only for a day, except that which is remembered. I remember, or, better still, I know of certain things; I can say I remember with safety—either I shall remember you, or you remember me." With this, swinging his arms for the hundredeth and first time, he got up, and put on his outer garments.

At the Alliance all was in full swing when Glimson arrived there. Baxter, Perkins, Burham and Caland, and a few others, were already in the smoking room.

"Ha!" said Caland, as he entered, "Glimson could tell more about it than I."

"Can I though," said Glimson, who, divested of his coat and hat, immediately seated himself in the most convenient position for swinging his arms.

"Yes," said Caland, "you know more about the past than I."

"What is under discussion?" said Glimson, lighting his pipe as a preliminary.

"The relation of supply and demand in the past in reference to labour," said Burham.

"I suppose the imposts and its reasons are the

subject, and how they dealt with the question before our time?" said Glimson.

"Yes, yes," answered the trio.

"We," said Glimson, "must look at things in their true light, or, to put matters plainly, discover them in their own nudity, and reason then to put matters right. It has been necessary to lessen our incomes because the supply is greater than the demand; and as the supply will continually increase in ratio to the demand, which cannot increase at the same pace under given conditions, our credit will decrease in proportion.

"There is a nice look out for you. You could have foretold this twenty years ago as easily as you know it to night. At no time has this differed, perhaps, for at every fall of the year you can read in the old newspapers—'trade continues slowly to decline'—but although business then might have been slack, that is, the demand might be almost nill, work always continued more or less. This was because of individual men carrying on business according to their own lights—otherwise called competition.

"Secondly—a great portion of trade in the past was really speculation. Perhaps it was the greatest feature. Without this feature trade could not exist, and it cannot exist now. There never was a period when the demand was for any length of time equal to the supply on all the markets of the world. Do you think that all the metals that the earth yielded,

or the goods that were manufactured, were consumed as soon as finished? If you do you are mistaken.

"They were sold and re-sold. The prices rose and fell from time to time, and, perhaps, the goods were stocked for years before being put to use. This, in the great business then carried on, was of little inconvenience, because loans, bills, and a hundred methods were at hand by which the merchants could raise money to carry on their business. This is how the world existed—by enterprise, by speculation, and competition; the result of Individualism. The currency aided this in the form of gold and silver coin, and paper. It was this that bought and sold everything.

"The system of barter was sufficient for the primitive times in which it was instituted, but it would not do later. Indirectly it always existed; but with money the merchants bought in advance, speculating on a arise in prices to yield greater profits. What would be the use of buying in this manner now, when there could be no profit. Why money itself was only merchandise, and was sold and bought to yield profit. If only sufficient goods were made to supply the immediate wants of the world, things would have come to a standstill long ago; assuredly as we will do now, or in the near future. Such, friends, are the benefits of Collectivism, and grand-motherly Government."

"But suppose the prices fell," said Perkins.

"Then some one, some individual, or individuals, lost," continued Glimson. "No doubt you would call this an artificial stimulus to trade, this speculation, but it was necessary, and it is still necessary to maintain the commercial equilibrium of the country."

"Well," said Caland, "there are other matters to be considered, such as the quantity of output during a given time."

"Decidedly," said Glimson. "There are many other matters to be taken into consideration. For instance, the suppression of our Individualism has limited our spending powers. Luxuries are of no utility in this matter-of-fact age. Who can buy jewellery? Nobody. Therefore, those who formerly were employed in such trades—and they were a numerous class—had to turn to other occupations and swell them. Then again, in the method of business in vogue, say seventy or eighty years ago, salesmen, travellers, and hundreds of different intermediaries were required for which now there is no room, and therefore exist not. Who travels now? Hardly anyone. For, except to pay a visit, we have no necessity to do so. Yet, formerly, returns of the railways—now replaced by aerial cars—went into millions. Now they represent not so many thousands. This travelling employed a host of men, who were ever hard at work. Now the necessary offices are quadrupled merely to give employment to some, which is a gross waste of human energy. What

enormous progress we have made in this ideal State. Is it not marvellous?"

"It all amounts to this," said Caland, "that individuality is necessary for the welfare of humanity."

"Then that was the object of Ingleton's lecture," said Baxter, who had been silent till now.

"Yes, of course it was," said Glimson.

"I said so," said Baxter.

"No, you never did," chimed his two friends.

"Didn't I though," said Baxter.

"No, it was not in you," chimed the other two, like a Greek chorus.

"Well then, what did I say?" asked Baxter.

"You said it was a very strong subject, and had a purpose," said the others.

"Well, is not that the same," said Baxter.

"No, it is not," was the dual answer.

"Shut up, you noisy beggars!" said Glimson. Turning to Caland, he added—"There never yet was a co-operative system established on a large scale but it failed. I have just been turning it over in my mind, and none that have kept to strict co-operation, but failed in the end. We are living on a co-operative principle, and that is why we fail. It is all well enough if you try it on a small scale, but as soon as it reaches any magnitude it bursts like a bubble—be-autiful!

"I remember reading in an old newspaper of the year 1890 or '91, or thereabouts, of a downright,

social co-operative ideal Utopian state being founded in America, and that one day the cook ran away—they numbered but a few—and down came the society like a pack of cards. You see we cannot be everlastingly erecting public buildings and bridges, and such like, though we have been doing it for a long time; and the cry is now almost general of 'got no work to do,' better understood in other days, because none of us have ever yet done a hard day's work."

"Who have not?" shouted the three others.

"You," said Glimson, laughing.

"That's wrong," shouted they.

"Have you ever felt tired, except from laziness?" said Glimson.

"It is true enough after all," said the trio with one voice.

"Misdirected energy," said Glimson, "that is what I call all the proceedings of the age."

"I say! Will any more lectures be given by Ingleton?" said Perkins.

"The time is not yet ripe," said Caland, stopping Glimson, who was about to speak.

"What fruits are you looking for?" said Burham.

"The effects of last night's lecture," said Glimson.

"In what respect?" said Baxter.

"What is your opinion of it?" said Glimson, answering by a question.

"That it was correct," said Baxter. "It was intended to show the faults of the present, and——" He stopped.

"And?" said Glimson.

"To change it, if possible," said Baxter.

"By 'it' you mean the Government," said Caland.

"Yes," said Baxter.

"Hurrah!" shouted the chorus.

"And what tells you that?" said Glimson questioningly.

"My individual perception," said Baxter.

"Hear! hear!" shouted the chorus.

"Your individual perception—I like the phrase. Well, you are not altogether wrong," said Glimson; muttering under his breath, "Messieurs beware! the dawn of reason."

"Well, will another lecture be given?" said Perkins.

"At present we should be prevented. Wait, friends. It took a hundred years to form this state, let it take as many days to destroy it," said Glimson. Hallo! I have been speaking treason, that is the upshot of dabbling with politics.

"You are safe with us," said Perkins.

"Of course," said Baxter and Burham.

"Supposing you were offered the opportunity, would you join in any movement," said Glimson (speaking softly so that only those near him could hear), "for the suppression of the Government?"

"I for one," said Caland.

"And I," said the three others together.

"Then be discreet and silent, and you shall hear more later," said Glimson.

"'Patience and silence' should the motto be," said Caland.

"O gentle friend, upon the heat and flame of your distemper sprinkle cool patience—Shakespeare perverted," said Glimson—"you shall hear more anon."

"Remember, that which is patience in mean men is cowardice in great ones," said Caland; "yet it is necessary to bide our time. I for one do not care when you are ready."

"Well! good night, friends," said Glimson. "You shall hear from Ingleton very soon."

Walking homewards, he muttered, "The seed has been sown in a whirlwind, yet it flourishes all the same. I have not judged the people wrongly. They are prepared for it, and will rise to the occasion. Messieurs beware!"

In all the dining halls and other places where the people were used to meet and argue the burning question of the hour, two topics were under discussion: Ingleton's question on Individualism, and the impost. Fierce were the arguments, plentiful was the tobacco smoke, and the expenditure in liquids wrought havoc among the credit cards.

Every number of the *Half Hour* was snatched up eagerly, read and re-read, explained and listened to with the utmost attention.

It contained in its earliest editions the lecture, and later on, the comments on it.

In all parts of the country the impost and its reason were given, but not questioned in the newspaper.

The lecture certainly was the chief topic, and brought out varied expressions of opinion. Many found themselves in possession of an individuality which they had never thought of before. Others again, knowing, feeling its strength, intended to give it free rein now and for ever; yet none there were who understood fully what that meant.

Thus began this great agitation which the voice of one individual had created, for everyone understood how it affected the Collectivism which from that moment was regarded as tyranny. In what it resulted is a matter of common history. But onward! onward! We have not time to stay.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the many peculiarities which characterised the President of the Alliance, his meal was undoubtedly one. It was an eccentric meal, taken every morning at the hour of ten precisely.

What a commotion there would be if the joint were not done to a turn, or the vegetables were not ready for serving, or the soups were cold, or any other of those domestic mishaps would occur—as occasionally they did.

On this particular morning all was perfectly in order, and the meal had been fetched from the common dining hall exactly at the proper moment. So there it was, all hot and steaming on the table, ready to be eaten, nor did Mr. Slowun let it cool—not he.

"Come, my child, fall to," he said to Pelham Stocking.

That worthy, although not used to these dinner-breakfasts, and having visions of the horrors of indigestion and hosts of kindred visitations—for which *vide* the medical journals—began eating in a very leisurely fashion, pecking here and there at the most succulent portions of the meat, and eating them slowly and thoughtfully.

A casual observer might have noticed two things.

First, the absence of drinkables on the otherwise well-spread board; and, secondly, that the receiving tube of the telephone—against the mantelpiece—stood open. This last matter—a careless oversight, indeed—might not give rise to the same amount of questioning as the want of liquids.

Stocking, although he occasionally assisted at these meals, felt the want indeed, and asked to be supplied with something to drink.

"You know animals never drink while they eat," said Mr. Slowun, in Cassandra-like tones, in answer to Stocking's request.

"But I am not an animal; and besides, all vegetable feeders find sufficient moisture in their food to aid mastication," said Stocking, with whom this was a stock answer on all such occasions.

"Well, then, have something," said Mr. Slowun, ringing a bell; upon which some liquid refreshment was brought into the room.

For some time the meal was eaten in silence, but Stocking, who had soon finished, said—

"I thought Ingleton would have continued his lecture the other night."

"Then he would have been imprisoned," said Mr. Slowun.

"I think a conspiracy is a-foot," said Stocking, hesitatingly.

"A conspiracy!" said Mr. Slowun, surprised.

"Yes," answered Stocking.

"Who is conspiring?" said Mr. Slowun.

"Why, Ingleton and his party, I should say," said Stocking.

"Bother it! What is it all about?" said Mr. Slowun.

"Well, feeling is running high just now, you know," said Stocking, slowly.

"Yes, bother it! I read about it yesterday. Bother it!" he whined.

"And, if I mistake not the man, Ingleton will take advantage of it."

"What! A *coup d'etat*—a surprise! Nonsense, you don't mean that?" said Mr. Slowun, springing up from his seat in bewilderment.

"Oh! not so bad as all *that*," said Stocking, laughing.

"Oh, you bad boy to frighten me so," said Mr. Slowun, reseating himself.

"I never intended to give you a fright. It has not come to that yet, but it may do so," said Stocking.

"Nonsense! Rubbish! There is nothing to grumble about," said Mr. Slowun, continuing the meal.

"Well, others think there is."

"Fools! they are then."

"You see the impost has assisted the feeling."

"Rubbish—*they* have *no* right to be dissatisfied.

"Right or no right—they are."

"Will you have another helping of vegetables?"

"No thank you. Conspiracy is the greatest crime punishable by law."

"Yes."

"Then if it were proved that James Ingleton and Mark Glimson *were* conspiring, they would immediately be arrested?"

"I should say so."

"Well, then, I believe they are doing so now."

"You must be able to prove it conclusively."

"M', yes. I should like to give evidence, if I *could* prove it."

"Yes—but you do not know for sure."

"No—I have no proof, but I am certain of it in my own mind."

"I shall give information then, and they will be watched."

"Yes, that would not be bad."

"Bother it! I have such a lot to do; and I am finding myself more work."

"Well, leave it for the present. I shall ascertain first, and then you can act as you may think fit. I should not like to appear in the matter under any circumstances."

"Why not?"

"Well, you know, I should be dubbed an informer, and that would never do in a certain quarter."

"And that certain quarter is?"

"Oh! never mind that just now. Will you stay everything till I ask you to?"

"Well, I must go down to the office now. Bother it."

Saying this Mr. Slowun rose from his seat.

Meanwhile, Stocking sat uneasily on his chair. "Confound it, this is continually haunting me. I shall go mad soon if it lasts much longer. I never expected *this*, when I did it"—he shivered in his chair—"no rest by night, no peace by day. Bah! It is my own fault; I am moody and ill at ease; I am frightened of being found out, that is it. Bah! Conscience! I don't care a fig for it."

He laughed in a shrill false tone. "I shall go on. The unexpected is continually happening. He was last in my thoughts, and one minute ended it all. Now Ingleton, Glimson next, two birds with one stone, and that stone will be a heavy one; and *then* Miss Collingwood, high and mighty, you are mine. I suffer the torments of hell for you; you are my weakness, but I shall conquer you by fair means or foul."

Further meditation was prevented by the re-appearance of Mr. Slowun, armed with a black bag, the chief contents of which were sundry slices of toast, and copies of the *Half Hour*, and some papers which were carried to and fro by Mr. Slowun. Not so the toast, for that was regularly eaten.

"Well, are you ready, my child?" said Mr. Slowun.

"Yes, one minute," said Stocking, and he left the room for his hat and coat, with which he directly returned.

"Come on then, or we shall be late," said Mr. Slowun hurrying on.

* * * * *

Amongst the numerous acquaintances that Bligow had, was one, Andrew Streathan by name, and telephone operator by profession. About this worthy there is nothing in particular to chronicle. He was a plodding sort of individual, careful and diligent at his work of connecting and disconnecting wires in the room over which he presided.

Bligow had little to do the morning when Mr. Slowun and Stocking were taking breakfast together, so for want of better occupation he called upon Streathan to have a little chat to while away the time, and partially—as he confessed to himself—to see whether Streathan was willing to aid his and Ingleton's cause—"for a friend in the telephone department is a friend at court sometimes," he said to himself.

Their conversation had proceeded at some length when Streathan remarked "that the general haziness affected the communication, and rendered voices very indistinct."

A soft gurgling tone was heard—which immediately drew his attention to his work.

"That is no call," he said, turning to Bligow.

"How can you tell?" was the question.

"Oh! I suppose some careless fool has left his receiver open," said Streathan, keeping his ear to his machine. "Just look up A 93," he said, pointing to his index book.

Bligow, turning over the leaves and finding the numbers, said—"Mr. Slowun, President of the Alliance."

"Just come and listen," said Streathan, making room for Bligow, who put his ear to the tube. "Hallo!" said that worthy, who had listened silently for a minute, and dropping the tube, "they are talking about Ingleton."

"Well, you duffer, keep your ear on if it interests you," said Streathan, laughing.

Bligow did so, and then overheard the whole of the conversation between Mr. Slowun and Pelham Stocking.

"Who is speaking?" asked Streathan.

"I think Mr. Slowun and Pelham Stocking, but it is very indistinct in tone," said Bligow.

"Well, they are not speaking to the receiver, but conversing, and the sound is entering the telephone accidentally. The receiver, I suppose, must have been left open. Anything worth hearing? I do hear some pretty conversations and skirmishes in domestic warfare through these accidents," said Streathan.

"No! no!" said Bligow, hiding his eagerness as best he could, by laughing and dropping the tube occasionally. The conversation finished, he bade a hasty adieu to his friend, and made for Mark Glimson's abode. Upon his arrival there he found Glimson writing rapidly.

"The History?" queried Bligow, after the usual greetings.

"Yes," replied Glimson, continuing to write.

"Can you afford a quarter of an hour?" said Bligow, laughing.

"Yes; I hope not a bad one," said Glimson, turning himself round to face his friend.

"Not particularly good," said Bligow, seating himself.

"Oh! what is in the wind now?" queried Glimson.

"I think I have bowled over our friend Stocking."

"Have you? I have suspected him from the first?"

"This morning before I came here I went to Andrew Streathan. Do you know him?"

"No, I don't."

"He's a telephone operator, and I thought to win him over to our views."

"Well?"

"I did; but while with him I overheard a conversation between Mr. Slowun and Stocking. They must have left a receiver open in the room at Mr. Slowun's house, and the conversation was thus transmitted.

"Whew! wait a minute—have a cigar," with this Glimson handed Bligow a cigar, and lit one himself. Having given Bligow a light, he said—"fire away."

Bligow continued—"The sound was very husky, but I am almost positive of the speaker, and it certainly was the house."

He stopped to smoke.

"Well, what did they say?" said Glimson, impatiently.

"Stocking is playing a double game," continued Bligow. "He said that he suspected a conspiracy among us. He mentioned you particularly later on, when, I think, he must have been by himself, though, of course, I cannot be sure."

"If you had only had the kinteograph going in that room instead," said Glimson, thoughtfully.

"Yes; but I did not. He said it would be necessary to watch us; or, if I remember rightly, he seconded the idea—though he afterwards said it would be better not to do so, because of a certain quarter. By Jove! I was in such a hurry that I mixed the whole lot up. But that was what it amounted to. He did not like to appear personally in the matter, because of 'a certain quarter.'"

He began smoking again.

"So we are to be watched. That is how I take it," said Glimson, moving his arms.

"That would be pretty correct," said Bligow.

"Well, my friend, we will be pretty square with you soon," said Glimson, apostrophising space.

"You refer to Stocking, I suppose," said Bligow, laughing.

"Of course, who else do you think?" said Glimson. "Yes, I see through his little game. He is going to insinuate himself further, if he can. Let him try though, and pretend to be with us and then ruin us. He is cocksure of it, I dare say."

"Why does he hate us?" said Bligow.

"Ah! why? That is more than I can tell."

"I caught these words also—'No rest by night or day.' What do you think they refer to?" asked Bligow.

"No rest by night or day," said Glimson, swinging his arms and running his fingers through his hair. "I suppose his conscience troubles him about something?"

"About what?"

"More than I can tell. Perhaps his conscience reproves him concerning us; perhaps about some other mischief he has done."

"Had we not better tell Ingleton about him?"

"No."

"What?"

"No, decidedly not; Ingleton would fly into a passion, call Stocking face to face. We could not prove anything. You would be accused of eavesdropping, or more likely of fabricating the story. Stocking triumphant! Bah!" said Glimson, speaking at a furious rate.

Bligow laughed at his friend's alarm. "What then," he said.

"Remain silent. If he watches us, we will watch him. Play double; forge a chain of evidence around him too strong to break down. We hold trumps; we triumph; all smooth!" said Glimson, at the same rapid rate.

"Take it easy," said Bligow.

"Look here! We have to meet at Ingleton's house to-night."

"Yes."

"Don't go."

"Why?"

"Stocking would drop in promiscuously. I know his game. We must meet somewhere else; where he cannot overhear us," said Glimson, more calmly.

"Where then, I should like to know? At my place, or here? Anywhere would suit me," said Bligow, smoking complacently.

"No, we must be free from observation. No open telephone receivers if I know it," said Glimson, smiling.

"For a few moments both remained silent, Glimson swinging his arms at a marvellous rate, he and Bligow puffing continuously.

"I have it," said the latter at length.

"Where?"

"Willie Heughin can help us."

"Willie Heughin!"

"Yes, he is at the Aerial Station. We can borrow a car of some sort, and ascend to the clouds."

"Hurrah! famous!" shouted Glimson, in high glee.

"I know he can steer, and he is with us; for I saw him repeatedly before the lecture?"

"Misty weather would be all the better. More free from observation."

"Yes, it won't matter. We must get a small car, a special; that would do."

"Now for a conspiracy in the clouds, and the vanquishing of the dragon."

"I shall go and ask Heughin at once to be in readiness. What time?"

"Six-thirty will do."

"Yes."

"We must let Ingleton know."

"Upon my word, I forget for the moment."

"Shall I go and see him?"

"Yes! Tell him we have thought best to be free from observation; and ask him to meet us in Liberation Square, that will do. You are sure of Heughin though?"

"Oh! leave that to me. Six-thirty, Liberation Square. Well, good day, for the present," and Bligow, throwing the stump of his cigar in an ash tray, left the room.

"Well," said Glimson, having ushered Bligow out, "what a turning and a twisting. Opportunism must be our motto henceforth, for if I mistake not, if it takes too long, we shall be Individualized in cells. Well, Stocking, take care, I have often grumbled at the mist, but now I hope for it. I shall not be far out in my progiostications if I say we will succeed more rapidly than any one supposes. Therefore, Messieurs, beware! Fashion is the point to guide us, and Carlyism is the fashion now. It always was, when a generality of weakness existed. It is no wonder then, that people look up to strong and daring men, when they perceive the

universal inanity. James Ingleton fulfils to my mind all the Carlylian requirements, yet all the latter's heroes failed dismally. Courage, strength, and virtue, tempered by knowledge, and a careful estimation of the ultimatum, are qualities which combine to make the individual strength complete. Ingleton possesses them, with the weakness, I think, of fear for the sake of others, not for himself in the slightest. He has firmness, principle, virtue! Bah! I have been thinking. Thought—what is it, the activity of the brain, or the activity of the soul? Well, either will do for me; they may be the same, or they may not. I must work till the last moment. I shall continue the history. Perhaps I shall have the felicity of writing in better days, when I may be famous, when I may let my individuality——" He stopped himself. "Be—autiful! yet there is no wrong in thinking so," and he sat down and continued the history.

* * * * *

Stocking having, during the earlier part of the day, regaled himself with sundry cups of coffee in company with Mr. Slowun, thought to equalise matters by partaking of "the cup that cheers, but does not inebriate," in company with Miss Collingwood; therefore he repaired to 54, Liberation Square in a rather sanguine mood, which was in no wise diminished by the reception accorded him by Mrs. Berthon.

After having given the usual greeting, he said, "I cannot now press my suit upon Blanche."

Mrs. Berthon brought her eyes to bear upon him, and in a cynical tone, and with a toss of her head, said, "Of course you know best."

"You would infer that I am mistaken," said Stocking, in the same languid manner.

"I infer nothing," said Mrs. Berthon. "You have thrown up the struggle," with another shrug of her shoulders.

"I feel I must throw it up," said Stocking, seeming now more interested; "the odds seem too great. . . . What shall I do?"

"Surely, as a member of the superior sex, you have no need to ask me," said Mrs. Berthon.

"We are playing at cross purposes," said Stocking, earnestly. "You have too long been my confidante, and I yours, than that we need hide from each other our real feelings. I am against this engagement of Blanche; why should I not be?—this more bitterly—" and you are also opposed to the match. What am I to do?"

"'Faint heart never won fair lady,'" rejoined Mrs. Berthon. "I would not——"

The entrance of Blanche with the tea things stopped further conversation upon this topic. At the the same time, Georgie Berthon, full of vivacity and childish glee, bounded into the room and perched herself on her mother's lap.

The tea was drunk in silence. The company of Pelham Stocking had altogether dulled Blanche's conversational power; and as soon as tea was over

she rose as if to leave the room, but Stocking stopped her, saying, "It is seldom I see you now, will you play me some old tunes on your harp?"

Blanche felt inclined to refuse, but a look from her aunt was sufficient. "Yes, I will," she said, but her voice had a ring of reluctance in it.

Stocking rose and left the room. He soon returned with the harp, which he placed beside Blanche, and then took his seat with a feeling of coming victory.

Listlessly the fingers travelled over the cords, making music that sounded almost weird and uncanny.

Stocking watched her closely, looking up once or twice to Mrs. Berthon as if to know the exact cause of the langour.

Mrs. Berthon, without taking notice of these questioning looks, placed Georgie on her feet and noiselessly left the room.

Blanche did not see her aunt leave the room, and was therefore surprised to find Pelham Stocking standing beside her.

The last sounds of the music died away as Stocking, in quiet, yet decisive tones, turned to her and said, "Blanche, I have waited sufficiently long. I will now renew my protestations of sincerity."

Blanche, with face flushed, rose from her chair. The langour had left. She saw her aunt was gone. Evidently it had all been planned. "I know what you wish to say," she said, "I . . . I refuse to listen," and she crossed the room.

"I was about to say that I will not heed any scene you make; I *must*, I *will*, have an answer, and that to my——"

"This is unmanly," interrupted Blanche, her frame thrilling with excitement and passion.

"I am master," said Stocking, in louder tones.

Georgie was twanging the strings of the harp.

"Of nothing," replied Blanche.

"We shall see," said Stocking.

"Enough! you coward!" exclaimed Blanche, crossing the room towards the door.

"Stop, at your peril; I hold the mastery. The past shall return to the present if you do not agree to my wishes," said Stocking, with a contemptuous look.

Blanche stood for a moment undecided, then, with defiance written on every line of her face, she said, "Coward, do your worst!" and left the room.

CHAPTER XIV.

SLOWLY the hours passed. The mists of evening had risen. In the deepest shadows of the fountain in Liberation Square, James Ingleton and Henry Bligow were waiting for Mark Glimson. Silently they stood; and as the phono-chronometer gave forth the half hour, Glimson was seen leisurely walking round the fountain. Coming upon them, he motioned, and they slowly followed him.

Pelham Stocking, leaving Miss Collingwood's abode, angry at his reception at the hands of that young lady, saw them cross the Square.

At first he did not recognise them, and was already meditating where to go, to obtain such evidence as, in his own mind, was obtainable to incriminate the trio, when the attempt—an attempt which failed ignominously—of Glimson to give his arms one of those peculiar swings, attracted his attention.

"Glimson, Bligow, and Ingleton," he muttered, and cautiously he followed them, keeping well in the shadow of the houses.

They had turned the corner and were proceeding at a fair rate, followed some twenty paces behind by Stocking, when he, in his turn, was shadowed. Whether it was his own shadow, or a spy, it was difficult to say at first, so well were the footsteps dogged.

Thus they proceeded for some time, the first three unconscious of Stocking, and he unaware of a follower.

"Where are they going to I wonder?" muttered Stocking, as he saw he was nearing the edge of the glass roof, and felt the force of the air, which the air pumps were throwing out to prevent the mist entering the city. Any further meditation was prevented by Antony, who had been following Stocking, touching him upon the shoulder.

The others were already in the land of artificial wind, and the light was very meagre.

At the touch Stocking turned sharply round, horror depicted upon his face.

"Why haunt me now? this is too much!" he shrieked, waving his hands as if to dispel the vision, but nothing moved. "It tranfixes me—I cannot move—go away!" he shrieked.

Great beads of sweat were on his face. Antony came closer; and Stocking, staring wildly, gave a loud shriek and fell down in a swoon on the pavement.

For a few minutes Antony stood stock still and looked hard at Stocking; then, as a sudden impulse seized him, lifted his right foot, as though he intended to tread the life out of the man lying there; but Stocking's helplessness conquered Antony, who immediately put his foot down again, and hurrying away, left Stocking in his swoon. He tried to find Ingleton and the others, but his search was in vain.

To return to Ingleton and his friends. In a short space of time they reached the Aerial Station, now enveloped in the thick mist, which clung to the walls, hid the moon, and seemed to be oozing forth from the pavements of the streets at the same time.

"The weather is favourable to our designs," said Glimson, as they entered the building by a narrow door, which it would have been difficult to find, but that Heughin, hearing their footsteps, had opened it and let them pass in.

For a moment they were in pitch darkness, but Heughin pressing a button, an incandescent lamp showed them that they were in a car-shed.

Heughin motioned them to remain silent while he reconnoitered things outside.

He soon returned, and speaking in a low voice, said, "It will be safe—come," motioning to Bligow, who immediately assisted him to remove a covering from a small car in the centre of the shed.

"This is a special to hold four," said Heughin.

"Will not the electricity that you require to work the car with be missed?" said Glimson, closely examining the structure.

"No," answered Heughin; "we obtain our electricity direct from coal. With such good quality at our disposal we require but an infinitesimal quantity. But what I feared more was that the car itself would be missed, so I obtained permission to use it for private experiment, but undertook that no one else went with me."

"So that score is settled," said Ingleton.

"The reservoirs are charged, but not the air cell; and it is best to charge that, in case we have to mount higher, beyond the clouds, for then we will require it. Come, assist me to fill it quickly," said Heughin.

The four set to work at an air pump, and in a few minutes the hands of the meter denoted that the air cell had been filled to its utmost capacity. This caused the car to rise a few feet from the ground.

Opening the door Heughin said—"Now, sharp's the word."

The three entered and took their seats.

Heughin reversing the button, the electric light died out.

"Darkness," muttered Glimson, as Heughin, jumping in the car, closed the door.

"Wait a moment," said Heughin, feeling with his hands for various knobs and wheels, with which the car was steered. "Here it is."

Suddenly a soft light shone in the car.

"That is better," said Glimson.

"How are we going to leave the building?" said Ingleton, who had noted everything, and seemed at a loss to understand how they could get out.

"You could not hear," said Heughin, "because the car is air tight and, therefore, sound proof; but look"—and he pressed against a small window, causing it to force itself upwards—"what do you see?"

"Mist," said Bligow, with a slight chuckle.

"The roof has opened itself—the action is automatic. When a car leaves the ground the roof of this building opens itself; is it not good?" said Heughin, meanwhile steering the car in an upward direction, causing the other three to have a sensation as though the car were going to overturn itself. But nothing of the sort occurred; the seats being constructed on pivots, remained perfectly level, while the car described an obtuse angle.

"Hurrah!" shouted Heughin, pressing the window in the downward direction, "the roof has closed—we are free, free as the wind."

"Well, to business," said Glimson, with a preliminary swing of his arms.

"How high do you wish to ascend?" said Heughin, seating himself in front of his steering apparatus.

"We will leave it to you," said Ingleton.

"In this mist we should not be perceived, but we are in the track of the cars, and might meet with some at any moment. I advise you to ascend above the lower clouds," said Heughin, "then we shall be free from observation."

"All right, that will do," said Ingleton.

"Well, then, sit still," said Heughin; "the light will go out; we are about to rush through space. You can press these two windows"—he pointed to them—"in any direction and watch our flight through the air."

With this he placed his right foot on a lever, his right hand upon a wheel, and then pressing a knob with the other, increased the pace, then let the light go out. His window was pressed in an upward position; and thus in the dark, Ingleton and Glimson looking above them, they ascended. The car took such an angle that Ingleton and Glimson lost their foothold, while Bligow fell all of a heap on his seat.

In this position they remained for a few minutes, during which the proverbial pin might have been heard falling, while the car rose. The silence had become painful, when Heughin called out—"The moon! the moon! we are above the mist." He stopped the car, and released the lever pressure. The car came to a level.

"I shall not go through that cloud," he said, looking upward at a cloud which was within a hundred yards from the car. "We will go through a break up further;" and steering the car in the direction indicated, in less than twelve seconds they had passed through the clouds and were above them, with the moon shining beautifully overhead.

"Now to business," said Glimson, as the car stopped and came to a horizontal position, "and some light."

Heughin caused the light to appear.

"Before we decide what further is to be done, let us review what we have already accomplished," said Ingleton.

The others assenting, he proceeded—"I, for my part, have attempted to enlist the sympathies of the members of the Alliance by giving them a lecture—a negative, stopped-short lecture—on the subject which I have most at heart, and for which we must all strive, to establish society on a firm and satisfactory basis. So much for myself, and indeed it is very little. You," he turned to Glimson, "have also attempted to stir some of the members of the Alliance by proving the evils of Collectivism to some extent, and, as you say, with some effect. Bligow, you, in your turn, have done more than either, for I am sure we owe much of our present success to your individual exertion. So much for the past."

"Very little in the aggregate," said Bligow.

"We have arrogated to ourselves a universal cause. Of this I am sure, that, although but a few have joined us personally, we may safely count upon at least a thousand friends," said Glimson, giving his arms a swing.

"So much the better," said Ingleton. "Now, as to the next steps: we must gather all our friends together at some place or the other. That must be our first move."

"Yes, but we cannot obtain permission to hold a meeting. That is obvious; so we must do it in secrecy," said Bligow, who was now serious.

"I, for my part, would greatly wish to do everything openly and publicly," said Ingleton.

"Impossible," exclaimed Glimson. "Now as to where to hold this meeting. Have you any place to propose?"

"Yes," answered Ingleton. "In view of our not being able to act openly, I propose that we meet in some part of the old town—in some deserted house. No better place could be found to my thinking."

"Capital," said Glimson.

"How are we to get them to meet there?" said Bligow.

"That is a difficulty I have not been able to cope with yet," answered Ingleton.

"Oh!" that is easily got over," said Glimson. "First, we must decide on the exact house, and then I shall ask my friends to meet there, you and Bligow do likewise. Heughin, here, I am sure, will do the same" (Heughin assented), "and then we shall number, say—one way and another—fifty; that is a good start."

"And then," said Ingleton.

"Let us disseminate our principles as forcibly as we can, and leave others to take them. In a few days we could count upon fifty for each of those present," said Glimson, with a swing of his arms.

"Your idea is certainly simple and easy," said Ingleton, "what do you say to it, Bligow?"

"I consider it first class," said Bligow. I am sanguine enough to think that we could reckon upon four thousand, counting young and old.

Would not a few inflammatory pamphlets, distributed here and there, assist us?"

"Bravo," said Glimson, "that is another matter. But how are we to get them printed?"

"Duplicated writing process," rejoined Ingleton. "We have forgotten Pelham Stocking; had we not better see him; he should have been here."

"Leave him to me," said Glimson, "I will see him."

"We have altogether forgotten with what we should supersede Collectivism,—I mean what form of Government," said Ingleton.

"A constitutional Monarchy were best."

"Similar to that of the nineteenth century?" queried Glimson.

"Yes, with some modifications," replied Ingleton.

"I have nothing to object to that," said Glimson.

"Nor I," said Bligow.

"There still lives in Africa a scion of the Guelphs. The crown could be offered to him."

For a moment they all remained silent, Glimson running his fingers through his hair, having previously taken his hat off for that purpose. "Do you know anything of him?" he asked of Ingleton.

"Very little at present. What I purpose is, that as soon as we have formed a powerful party, we shall make overtures to him—send some one to interview him, and learn his disposition. Then formulate certain conditions if we find him agreeable, and *worthy*."

"Especially *worthy*," interrupted Glimson, with emphasis on the word.

"Yes, that is the greatest condition," continued Ingleton; "and then, either by peaceful or forcible methods, overthrow the present system. And then, free reign to Individuality."

"Hurrah!" shouted Bligow, growing merry in anticipation.

"It would take some time to get to Central Africa and back," said Glimson, thoughtfully.

"You could leave that to me," said Heughin, who had been listening to the whole of the conversation. "I could undertake to devise a method by which someone could go to Central Africa and back—stay there one day—in three days."

"What! said Glimson in surprise, "on the telephone?"

"Do you see that moon?" said Heughin, pointing with his forefinger. "How long does it take before the moon rises twice above us?"

"A day—four and twenty hours," said Bligow laughing.

"Well, I can do ditto," said Heughin. "Are you satisfied if I give my word upon it?"

"Yes," answered Ingleton doubtfully.

"Plenty of time for that," said Bligow laughing.

"Well, we have arranged for a meeting, and pamphlets. I will drawn up the pamphlets and leave them in the proper places, and see my friends," said Glimson.

"I will find the place of meeting," said Ingleton, "and let you know."

"And I will stir everybody," said Bligow.

"And I ditto," said Heughin.

"We stand some risk in this indiscriminate method, but we cannot help that," said Glimson, with a move of his arms.

"Well, we have built castles in the air—high up in the air," said Ingleton.

At this sally, Bligow laughed in his old hearty fashion.

"I do not think there is anything else to arrange to-night," said Glimson after a pause.

"No, not at present; we must proceed with caution," said Ingleton.

"Ha! there is the impost. Can we not make some use of the present agitation against it?" said Bligow.

The other two sat quietly thinking for a moment, then said together, "No, I cannot see how we can make use of it, but we shall have assembled before it is over."

"When do you propose holding the meeting?" said Bligow.

"Three days hence, at about the same time as we met to-night. I will let you both know the place early to-morrow," said Ingleton.

"You forget that very few know their way in the old town; so mind you send explicit directions," said Glimson.

"I shall make certain marks on the notice

papers, which you will be able to find when I send all the particulars," said Ingleton.

"Friends, the meeting has been declared over," said Glimson, putting his hand on his breast in a most pompous manner. "I propose a vote of thanks to Heughin for his kind assistance."

"More than thanks are due," said Ingleton; "let us descend."

"Well, then, seat yourselves firmly," said Heughin, turning towards the steering gear, and placing his feet on two levers or treadles. The light disappeared, the car oscillated for a moment, then Heughin was heard pulling and pressing knobs in the dark. They sank, or rather the car descended at a great speed, causing the occupants' blood to rise to their heads. Down, down, they went—it seemed ages, lasting but a few minutes; and they almost fell from their seats from the sudden stoppage of the car. The light reappeared. Heughin was looking out of window, and steering the car to a platform on the roof. This righted, he exerted all his strength on the levers; and as the car touched the platform it rebounded slightly. "Good," said Heughin, "the roof is opening." In a second more they were in the shed from which they had ascended. "The best bit of steering I have ever done," said Heughin, as the car stopped still, after another rebound. He removed his feet from the levers, opened the door, and the others stepped out, feeling slightly giddy from the rapidity of the journey.

Heughin followed them. "This way out," he said, and led them to the door. They bade each other good night, and made for their homes, each taking a different route, as had been pre-arranged.

Glimson took the same road by which he had come, (the mist had slightly decreased,) and on entering the *covered* town he found, lying against the wall, in a deep shadow, a man. It was Pelham Stocking.

Glimson lifted him, and felt his pulse. It was very feeble; and he noticed that the hands were clenched, and foam on the mouth. "Why, Pelham Stocking in a fit—there's a queer discovery," he said to himself; "and he is as cold as ice."

He lifted him on his knee and said, "I thought he was dead at first; what has done this?"

He dragged Stocking into the light, wiped the foam from the mouth, and began chafing the hands; then he quickly opened the outer garments and began rubbing each limb in turn. Under this treatment life slowly returned, and the first sound that escaped Stocking's lips were, "Go away," but so feebly as to be almost inaudible. Glimsom continued the chafing, and muttered, "I wish I had some water here."

"Go away," muttered Stocking again.

"Eh!" said Glimson, "go away. Who is to go away?"

"Go away, you haunt me," muttered Stocking incoherently, with his head on Glimson's knees, and

his face ghastly white, which the piercing light enhanced.

"Haunt you," muttered Glimson; "your conscience haunts you of your evil deeds no doubt!" He renewed the chafing.

"Oh! oh! oh! shrieked Stocking in tremulous broken tones; and then with a sob, "No rest by night or day! Go away!" in a despairing tone.

He was about to swoon again when Glimson shook him somewhat roughly, and said, "Wake up, I, Mark Glimson, am with you. You have had a fit. . . . Come, pull yourself together."

"This had the desired effect, for Stocking opened his eyes and looked around him in a dazed manner, saying, "Where am I?"

"Oh, you are all right," said Glimson, lifting him on his shoulder. Staggering under his burden he walked to Bellamy Avenue, where he laid Stocking down and bathed his temples with water from the fountain.

Stocking, now revived, asked, "Who brought me here?"

"I found you," said Glimson, "at the end of the Avenue in a fit, and brought you here. I have called no one as I know you do not like a fuss."

"Thank you, Glimson," said Stocking, trying to rise, but his legs gave no support to his body.

"Gently, my friend," said Glimson, helping him up and setting him on the coping of the fountain, "you want a reviver."

"I shall be everlastingly under an obligation to you, Glimson," said Stocking.

"Hush, man, any one would have done the same; but talking in the cold will do no good. Come home with me," and without waiting for a reply he lifted Stocking up, and, supporting him, took him home.

Arrived there, he called for all the necessary restoratives; and by the time warm food was brought in, Stocking was himself again, and was seated by the stove.

"Now you are pretty well," said Glimson, assisting him to brush his clothes.

"I can never repay you," said Stocking. "I went that way for a walk. I remember getting as far as the air pumps, but the rest is a blank till I found myself in Bellamy Avenue. I have not the slightest notion what occurred. I have had fits before, but very seldom. I wonder what caused it?"

"A sudden but incomplete stoppage of the heart's action, brought on somehow or another," said Glimson, seating himself.

"It is very strange," said Stocking.

"Yes, it is," said Glimson; "but it must have a cause. Come—take this!" handing him a basin of broth.

"I really cannot make it out," said Stocking, sipping the broth.

"What time did it occur?" said Glimson.

"About seven, or a little later," answered Stocking.

"Well, you had better stop here for to-night," said Glimson; "the night is cold, and will do you no good."

"I really cannot trespass on your good nature any more," said Stocking.

"Bah!" said Glimson, "you must stop here. will have a bed made up immediately; a good night's rest will put you as right as a trivet."

"No, really I will not," said Stocking.

"Come, come, no nonsense, you are my charge for to-night. Shall I let anyone know you are here; I mean anyone at your home?" said Glimson.

"No need of that."

"I thought you would not like anyone to know, so I called for no assistance."

"You are increasing my debt of gratitude every moment; I shall never be able to repay you."

"Tut, man, it is nothing; to-morrow's sun will disperse my goodness and your debt."

"You think me ungrateful?"

"Not in the least; but, I have but done that which I would have done for anyone, and therefore need no thanks."

"You merit high praise, for you are large-hearted."

"Would you have not done the same for me?"

"Most decidedly."

"Well, then, where do I exceed you in goodness? The man who refuses to assist another deserves decapitation."

"A very strong term that."

"Not half strong enough. Come, your bed is ready; I will show you the way, and then to rest." Saying this, Glimson assisted Stocking on his feet, for he was still somewhat shaky, and helped him out of the room.

"It is very strange," said Stocking, "that I cannot remember what caused me to swoon; it is a blank hour lost in my life."

CHAPTER XV.

THE world was busy; there was bustle and noise; but the day was raw and cheerless.

The world was astir, and as a natural consequence the machinery was in motion, the furnaces were glowing, the wheels turning, and the noise of scraping, filing, and blasting was to be heard. Amid all this din, a small still voice was yet audible.

Here is its burthen blown, by the wind, on to a window-sill. No! for a stone held it down; evidently it was placed here by design—not by accident.

The first comer, a man of stout build, with thin legs and a peculiar old-world face, beheld it, lifted the stone and read the paper. Let us peep over his shoulder and do likewise.

"What! who! how!" Such exclamations as these escape the reader's lips in quick, rapid succession. For this is what he reads:—

"Awake! awake! doomed city and your inhabitants, ere it is too late. You are environed by a power which is devouring your vitality and existence. What is it? What is this fell destroying agent? Collectivism! Collectivism, which has arrogated to itself the position of your teacher, your master, your judge, and your accuser.

How long will you remain a slave to a tyrant who enthralls you, who ordains the order of your life, even before it has commenced? This potent power has been created by a class rightly called Levellers! Levellers, who have degraded you to the lowest depths. You are like beasts of burden—tethered to the stake, with just rope enough to allow you to nibble at the grass.

"But, beware! if you attempt to lift your head you are strangled! Strangled by the overpowering weight of this Collectivism which grudges free scope of thought and action to each individual human being. Arise! arise! ere the potent drug brings the sleep of death and all is oblivion, for then you will count as naught, as mere non-entities in the great crowd of Collectivism.

"If you believe in free will, freedom of action, of thought, and of life, either replace this paper or hand it to another."

That was all that the small voice had to say. The reader hummed and ah'd, looked dazed, as if he had just awoke from a long sleep, shook his head repeatedly and went on his way, either taking it with him or replacing it as directed.

Everywhere these notes were read eagerly and attentively.

This had been Glimson's work, assisted by Stocking. They had been early astir, and by duplicating the messages had distributed them in different parts of the city. They were passed from hand to hand,

and even found their way to Birmingham, Liverpool, and other towns in the north.

Who wrote this—who had courage enough to brave the State? Not the slightest clue was to be found, and therein lay the great secret of the success of the agitation. Humanity loves a mystery. A pamphlet which touched the right cords, and yet did not say too much, or reveal its author, took the people's fancy. The mysterious bidding to bestir themselves struck home like a well directed shot, and as a consequence it quickly became the subject of general, if stealthy, conversation.

Then there was another matter also that provoked a good deal of comment.

In the Alliance Club appeared a notice to the effect that James Ingleton had been proposed by Arthur Caland as a representative of the Alliance at the Convention, and that Mark Glimson had been proposed by Baxter to fill a similar post.

On this eventful day—the 18th October—Mrs. Ingleton, Nellie, and Miss Janette Smithers, were seated in the room were Katie lay.

"My mother always told me," said Mrs. Ingleton, "that it was dangerous to be anything more than a simple citizen, and Heaven knows into what an embroglio this will lead James."

"Well, James should not do it," said Miss Smithers. "It is not the fashion to have ideas, and when it is not the fashion he has no right to do it. In this age everyone should retire into his own little

territory; like a snail, he should crawl back into his shell, and then he can be natural; that is, as natural as it is possible under present circumstances. He is a dreamer, a thinker—he thinks of everyone but himself. I have no patience with him. Bah! He is a dreamer."

"James is dissatisfied with the present State," said Nell, quietly, "and since I have read the history he got me I think he is right."

"Ah! child," said Mrs. Ingleton, "if you could have heard the stories my mother used to tell me about men who were dissatisfied, you would shudder—indeed, you would," she repeated, as Nell shook her head defiantly.

"Bah!" exclaimed Miss Smithers, moving about restlessly in her chair, "James would be a reformer. What right has he to be a reformer? he should not be a reformer. I never heard of such a thing. I tell you what—it is all rubbish. James is hot-headed. He is jumping headlong in a chasm; the novelty of it has turned his head. He will not find anyone else follow such a foolish fashion. I really cannot put up with such eccentricity."

"But, aunt," said Nell, taking up the cudgels for her absent brother, "they must think well of him, for I heard this morning that he and Mark Glimson have been proposed as members of the Convention, the highest honour it is possible to attain."

"Rubbish, child. Honours!—honours to assist making a lot of stupid laws. Supposing there are a

lot of fools who want to create a revolt, why should James lead them? It is ridiculous." Miss Smithers said this in a tone as if she had now completely settled the question.

"My mother always told me," said Mr. Ingleton, "that reformers never came to any good. 'Joe,' she used to say—that was my father—'Joe, when the taxes rise there is trouble in store, Joe;' and my father always agreed with her. For there never was a new tax, or a tax raised or lowered, but someone grumbled, so there," and Mrs. Ingleton sat triumphant, convinced that her statement was irrefutable.

For a moment Miss Smithers shifted about in her chair, and then she said—"Taxes, or no taxes, it has nothing to do with it. He should be a citizen and nothing more. Of course, people grumble. When do they not grumble? I never yet knew a man that did not grumble—the big straggling creatures—they always grumble—they think it good taste."

"They, and we, have cause to grumble; that is undeniable," said Nell.

"But that has nothing to do with it," said Miss Smithers.

Katie, who had been silent till now, said—"Auntie, dear, don't be angry with James."

"Bless the child, who is angry," said Miss Smithers, getting up and kissing the child.

"Then you are not angry?" said Katie slowly.

"No, dear, decidedly not," said her aunt hastily.

"I am sure auntie is not angry, Katie," said Nellie.

When Miss Smithers returned to her seat, Mrs. Ingleton whispered—"She is a little better just now."

"Oh! she will grow out of it," said Miss Smithers.

A bell rang, and immediately afterwards Ingleton entered, who approached his ailing sister and kissed her. Then he greeted the others and sat down.

"Well, James, where have you been?" said his aunt.

"At the Alliance," answered Ingleton, laconically.

"And what did you there?" said his aunt.

"I went to see about this proposal of making me a member of the Convention," said Ingleton, carelessly.

"James, you are dreaming," intimated his aunt.

"I suppose I am," he replied, in the same abstract manner.

"Your proposer is Arthur Caland?" said his aunt.

"Yes."

"He is also a dreamer," said his aunt.

"I don't know," raising his eyebrows, and then lowering them.

"Look, now!" said his aunt, looking at him sharply, "you are in a day dream. You fancy you are already elected"—James looked amazed—"you are composing an inflammatory speech; you fancy

yourself speaking; you are watching the affect of your words. You think yourself a second Cromwell. You end by dismissing the Convention. You are a dreamer."

Ingleton was amazed. He looked hard at his aunt, and said—"You are a thought-reader—it is true."

"Bosh! who is a thought-reader?" said his aunt.

"You are," answered James, more at his ease.

"It requires no thought-reading," answered his aunt.

"I can guess what was uppermost in your mind, and put two and two together, that is all. Thought-reading, faugh!"

"Life constitutes a trance, pleasant or otherwise, mostly the latter; it does not seem a reality," said Ingleton.

"That is your mistake. It is bitter enough and hard enough, but you are a visionary, and that is rubbish," said his aunt.

"Well, James, how about the election?" said Nell.

"As far as I am able to ascertain there is no likelihood of an opposition," said James.

"Oh! don't become a member of that Convention. My mother always told me it was not good," said Mrs. Ingleton.

"Why not, mother?" asked James.

"My mother always told me," answered she,

"that a member of a Convention, or a Senate, or something of this kind, was imprisoned once, and another was killed once. How horrible that would be now."

"You always paint dark pictures," interposed Miss Smithers.

"Of two conclusions, mother always chooses the worst," said James, smiling.

"And in that she is not always wrong," said his aunt. You, on the other hand, are too sanguine. There never seems an obstacle in your path but it is so small that you can push it aside. Life is not a path strewed with flowers. You look upon events through rose-coloured spectacles."

"True, except the present existence," answered Ingleton.

For some time all sat silent, till Ingleton broke the spell by saying, "There is a peculiar rumour about."

"A fib, you mean," said his aunt.

"Just as you like to take it, but at all events it is a serious matter. It is said that within another month some great changes will be proposed in the present Government."

"More trouble," said Mrs. Ingleton. "My mother always told me that changes brought trouble."

"Why, it must refer to you," said Nell.

"To me!" said James. "I have taken no action, that is, no decisive action."

"Nell is right," said her aunt. "Who wrote that

pamphlet I found on my doorstep this morning?"

"In confidence," said James—"Mark Glimson."

"You don't say so!" said his aunt.

"What?" said James.

"Why, of course, you don't see it, but some of those who read this have concocted this tale."

"I do not think so," said James.

"You, dreaming in the future, are not alive to the present," said his aunt.

"Well, I doubt whether it has anything to do with me," reiterated Ingleton.

"James," said his aunt, "you are soliliquising unconsciously. Nothing is so bad, nothing so distressing. You conjecture uselessly. Conjectures are like a ball bouncing on a hard surface: the further you throw it, the more it rebounds. You are plunged in reverie; and you think, dream, and imagine; and any sound, any noise, will shatter your ideas into a thousand fragments. Do you know what that might lead to?"

"I have never troubled myself about that," answered Ingleton.

"Something terrible. A monologue ends in a duologue between mind and matter, as it were," said his aunt.

"True," rejoined Ingleton.

"In the continuance of thought there is danger, as in floating reverie there is safety," continued his aunt. "Darkness becomes partially visible; the profound and obscure seem pierced by a ray of

light; the future stands revealed for a moment, a blurred picture, then all is darkness—oppressing darkness."

"Yes," interposed Ingleton. Nell and her mother were listening attentively.

"Beware of that darkness, James," continued his aunt.

"Why?" said Ingleton.

"Because it might end in oblivion," concluded Miss Smithers.

"By oblivion, you mean ——"

But his aunt checked him saying, "You understand, so heed my words."

"You know me better than I know myself," said Ingleton.

"I have experience, that is all," said his aunt sadly.

"You recommend——" said Ingleton.

"That you take plenty of exercise, spend your time with your fellows in cheerfulness, and get a (with a smile) certain . . . you know what I mean, to banish the humour," said his aunt.

"I will attempt to follow your advice," said Ingleton.

"Well, I must go," said Miss Smithers; and she hastily rose from her seat, went to Katie who was sleeping, kissed her, and then bade them "Good morning."

Ingleton following her to the door. As she departed, she said, "James, whenever you are in difficulty,

come to me, and see what a woman's wit can do for you," and she kissed him affectionately.

With all her asperity, her stern looks, and peculiar methods of speech, she was fond of her relatives.

Antony—for by no other name was he ever known—was ugly. The contortions of his features, created by that mass of wrinkles, were almost repulsive. The two extremes manifest the divine Creator. The beautiful is the good, the noble the sublime, as representative of the great power. The hideous unfolds the hideous, and nothing else, that is everything. Such are the impressions of the Maker's intent. Yet, through the coalescent power given to man, the face is but a mask, a mere nothing. Well did the heathen know it. Minos and Minerva are stern and passive, often harsh. Venus and Bacchus, a twin ideal, at times put to base uses, are beautiful. Such are the representative idols of the human passions. Judge not your brother by his face alone. Judge by the action of the brain, the working of the passions, and then pronounce your verdict. Be not hasty, for hastiness is a too common vice. A crystal goblet is a pleasant object, and a wooden barrel unattractive. Yet the latter is the better of the two for preserving wine. Thus with the passions: hideousness need not betoken evil. The equal balance of the scales is the highest ideal. Thus far and no farther. Neither montrosity, nor the pronouncedly beautiful,

form it. 'Tis not in the glaring sunshine, nor the sullen clouds. Harmony alone is the ideal of all good, the one supreme quality which eclipses all surface blemishes. Thus with man: when the obscurity of the face is equalised with good intent, we are human—sufficient that man be human. So with Antony, his features disappeared when his thoughts took action.

Ingleton was seated by himself except for the presence of Katie, when Antony entered the room on tip-toe.

Ingleton greeted him, speaking slowly, as he knew Antony's dimness of thought.

Antony, having shaken hands with him, walked on tip-toe to the bed where Katie was sleeping peacefully.

Tenderly he replaced the coverlet. The wrinkles on his face smoothed themselves, and a look of profound pity came into his eyes. It was but rarely that Antony exercised the power of controlling his features. But now his face was smooth, and in his eyes, otherwise so dim, was a look of earnest sympathy, as he gently laid his hand upon that frail head.

Silently he remained by the bedside, watching every movement of the sleeper. His face, distraught with the power of his emotions, was a picture well worthy the brush of an artist. He gazed on those eyelids as though asking himself: "Were they ever thus?" He removed his hand from the forehead, and

remained by the bedside without moving a muscle. Herein Antony was beautiful. Herein he exhibited the work of the Master hand as he stood there watching the sleeping child. No nurse could have been more attentive, for not a movement escaped him. At length the wrinkles slowly returned to their places, and his mouth closed with a snap; but down his cheeks two tears wended their troubled course. He wiped them away, and turned softly from the bed. He was Antony again—Antony the wrinkled and deformed! Has the human frame an entity which we cannot penetrate, or not? Where is the scientist that can answer truthfully? The poet songster believes in its existence. Antony, in dimness of sight and slowness of speech, had perception. From the little hole, his existence he perceived; from the look he had taken at the kaledis-cope of life, he had retained one colour—it was love. It was the love of a faithful dog for its master; made up of admiration and fidelity, without the taint of selfishness. Of that sick child he thought himself the guardian and servant. Affection without restraint. He would have offered his life to yield her a moment's pleasure. He would have cried, "She *may* not be ill." He was natural, and nature is the mother of the soul.

He seated himself, and remained silent till Ingleton said to him, "What have you been doing lately?" pausing between each word.

"Thinking," was the answer.

"What have you been thinking about?" asked Ingleton.

"Life!" answered Antony as he looked towards the child.

"You mean death."

"Both," answered Antony.

"Tell me what you thought," said Ingleton, curious to know Antony's ideas.

"Why has God created evil?" said Antony, stuttering over each word.

"You would penetrate the mysteries of nature," said Ingleton.

"I . . . would . . . like to know . . . why . . . she is ill," said Antony, pointing to the child.

"Destiny," answered Ingleton moodily.

"Eh!"

"Fatality."

"I do not understand."

"Nor I."

Antony looked at space, and pointed upwards. Ingleton watched him closely, and said, "Yes, it is the law of nature, the fixed rule from which there is no departing.

"She suffers," said Antony.

"Yes," said Ingleton.

"Lord . . . Lord . . . why has thou done this thing?" said Antony in his broken speech.

The tinkling of a bell, and the opening of a turning box, announced Mark Glimson, who immediately entered.

Antony motioned him to tread softly.

Mark Glimson was an example of the diversity in man's nature—the existence of individuality. Antony knew only purity, of evil he had but a faint instinct. Glimson understood cynicism. He knew society was a step-mother of nature. He was aware that the survival of the fittest meant the suppression of the weakest; and he acknowledged the existence of these evils, and believed they had a reason. He accepted, that the meeting of extremes produced a something—a revolution, a massacre, or an unheaval; but he looked for the sunshine after the storm. He had cynically observed that the increase of the population was a mistake; but he knew that the divinity which shapes our ends was just, and that the law of nature must be obeyed or a dire calamity result. In this frame of mind he joined Antony.

"James, your sister is somewhat better," he observed, seating himself near Ingleton; and turning to the child, he knit his brows till they met.

"Yes, there seems a change," answered Ingleton.

"I would like to have a few minutes' conversation with you," said Glimson, "and I would not disturb you sister."

"Then come to my room," said Ingleton, rising from his seat.

Antony watched them; and Ingleton, motioning him to follow, he said, "I stop here." They went into the next room, where Ingleton lighted a stove, and they seated themselves.

"What do you think of the proposition of making us members of the Convention?" said Glimson, swinging his legs.

"That if we are elected we could further our cause," said Ingleton.

"You are right. I have come to the same conclusion," said Glimson. "Matters seem coming to a crisis—time is hurrying onward. I did not anticipate this move; we must hold our meeting immediately. Caland, who is with us, has acted with precision. I did not think it right to come here, but on second thoughts, I concluded it might disarm suspicion."

"Let us act," said Ingleton, "openly and freely. The accursed State under which we live necessitates secrecy. It is repugnant to my soul. Therefore I shall be glad to seize this opportunity, if I be elected, to speak my mind openly—to charge the Government with depriving man of his individual rights, and thus misdirecting the Maker's purpose."

"Not so loud," said Glimson, "the walls have ears. Be careful."

"Life is a burden now, for free will is denounced. But what is the use of declamation? You know it as well as I do," said Ingleton with a sigh.

"All the more reason for prompt and decisive action," said Glimson. "The pernicious habits man is accustomed to now, would eventually destroy him if persisted in. I wrote so in my pamphlets,

and I doubt not their effect. When will you let me know the place of meeting?"

"To night," answered Ingleton. "Antony shall bring you word; and under the present circumstances the evening of the twenty-first will do as well as any other."

"Good," said Glimson, "I have work to do—so good day," and he departed immediately.

The same afternoon a notice was posted in the Alliance, stating that James Ingleton and Mark Glimson had accepted the candidature for membership of the Convention, and trusted to receive the votes of all the members. Not a word as to their policy, not a syllable as to the line of conduct they intended to pursue. And from the distance of time we write—and we have carefully examined the document in question—for it lies in the Royal Museum—it seems strange that no question should have been put directly afterwards, and that the candidates issued no programme. The statement of Buerlin, that the public mind had been agitated for some time, must be accepted without hesitation, although no proofs are extant, for it can but be rightly concluded, if any conclusion is to be drawn at all, that if no agitation had existed, these two candidates would have had their opinions challenged by their constituents.

CHAPTER XVI.

BEYOND the outskirts of the city where are, or rather were, the air pumps, the snow disintegrators, and the aerial apparatus, lay a wide belt of even ground, where once had stood thriving parishes. Here are the remnants of old London. Dust, wind, rain, and fog, have well nigh accomplished their fell work.

Few stroll this way, fewer explore it. This is the churchyard of the past, where the tombstones are the house walls, and the streets form the graves. Here, on the very edge, is a mound of stones, wood, and part of a cart, remains of a barricade raised in civil strife. There a few houses, the windows shattered, and great gaps where cannon had done their work. As we penetrate the labyrinth of streets, the dwelling houses grow fewer, until little else than empty space remains.

On a board hangs a sign, creaking in the wind, and with every movement a shower of rotten, powdered wood falls to the ground—decay everywhere! Onward, and we slip down. Was it a trench, or a sinking of the ground. None can tell. Up again. On the breeze comes a low cracked sound, weird and uncanny. It is the wind shaking a bell in a disused church. The ivy has covered its walls, and the foliage hides the breaches.

The grass grows in the streets, weeds in the window sills, and moss covers the walls.

What a scene of desolation! Fragments of charred wood and scorched brick lie strewn across the roadway, and we mutter—"A conflagration."

The wind stirs the mass, and for a moment life seems to have entered the mouldering remains. They move, they beckon us onward; but the wind subsides, and they are again lifeless. We enter a house still in fair condition. . . . Dust everywhere. Dust! We would desperse it; but let no sacrilegious hand touch it. Dust is life—a myriad microbes of evil, and a trillion evidences of life. Dust was the world, and dust it is. Burnt, fired, and crystallized, it is everything—humanity's brother—therefore, nothing!

Awake! awake! you dust heaps. Where are the men, the women, the children, the playthings, the brains, the wills? Dust, all dust.

Awake! The wind is calling you. Speak! tell your history; we will listen.

A flock of rooks, crowing and shrieking, fly out of the house, circling higher and higher. Here in the midst of the past they live.

As we mount the stairs, creaking and groaning under their unwonted weight, we are startled by a sound which strikes strange upon our ears. A great owl is sitting on the roof of a neighbouring thatch.

We ascend again, and the heavens are overcast. Yet, forward! A great heavy pall comes rolling towards us. The mist, like the billows of the

troubled sea, is covering all; the giant shadowy hands of the fog are grasping the spires and house-tops, and then slowly disappear. The sound of the bell is no longer heard.

The pall covers all. Above, the hooting of the owl, the shrieking of the rooks, and the flapping of wings can be heard: fitting accompaniments to the grimness of death and decay which reigns around.

Now and again re-echoes the tread of footsteps. Shadows seem to be flitting past, disappearing as soon as they come in sight.

Thus we find this old deserted part of London on the evening of the twenty-first of October; nor in spite of its now total disappearance, should the existence of this mass of decay be doubted, for representations of the spot still exist. Although science had persevered till fogs had been abated, yet mists were ever with us; and the marshy east being the great fog land, a general move was made in a westward direction, to avoid the nuisance as much as possible. Till the end of the seventeenth century, and somewhat later, London proper consisted of about a mile radius round St. Paul's Cathedral, but by the end of the nineteenth, it covered an area of twelve squares miles. One generation more saw this extended to over thirteen.

But at the commencement of the Social State, a general migration westward took place, and London ended at the eastern end of the old city boundaries.

In the old church, already mentioned, the secret

meeting of the Individualists was being held, so let us repair hence, if not in the body, at least in the spirit.

All that is visible to the eye is the uncertain light of two small incandescent hand lamps. Decay above all is there—the disused pews, the crumbling pulpit, the dust covered statuary, the thousand cobwebs, and the mouldering monumental stones, tell their own tale. The lofty ceiling is hidden by the shadows; and the beautiful stained glass windows are either broken, or their lustre is tarnished by the dirt. Hollow are the echoes, as now and again some one enters and approaches the circle of light. It requires but little imagination to fancy this a meeting of the dead, or to see the ghosts gliding upwards and along the pillars that support the old clock tower.

Here then met those who prized Individuality above life. On the tumble down steps of the pulpit sit James Ingleton, Mark Glimson, Harry Bligow, and Pelham Stocking. On the altar are the two lamps, and with their arms leaning upon it, stand Willie Heughin, Arthur Caland, and behind them the trio, Frederick Baxter, William Perkins, and John Burham. Jerrold Trevors is trying to read the inscription on a stone. Andrew Streathan is leaning against a pillar. Every now and then the noise of Thompson (who is acting as doorkeeper), doing an impromtu war dance on the flag stones, can be heard.

On the ridges of the first row of pews are seated

four young men, whose acquaintance we now make for the first time. They are John Dixon, Edward Vickers, Paul Hardale, and Walter Wharham; the latter, an electrician; the former three, gun operatives to the National Army of Defence.

Dotted about here and there, seated or standing, as best suited their inclination, were a score of others. We will mention but a few. George Cavendish, Augustus Beauclerc, Francis Fitzwalter, Hugh Cholmley, and Herbert Hollis. They came trooping in by twos and threes, till a count was called, and each answering to his name, they numbered forty-nine.

Then Ingleton ascended the pulpit, and said, "Thompson, you can join us now," and that worthy hastened forward to the circle of light.

"Friends, you are well aware why you are here," said Ingleton from his coign of vantage. The conversation ceased, they were all attention.

"After a quarter of a century of Equality, Fraternity, and so-called Liberty, it is found necessary to rise against the State, and why? The cries are but empty sounds. Equality has proved to be but ruthless levelling; fraternity, a mere phrase; and liberty has been withheld. Individuality has almost ceased—*almost* I say—but not quite, or else you would not be here. Individuality, our right, our birthright, has been abolished by the Convention. This is unjust, this is wrong. Does not the bird seek food for itself; does it not possess

freewill? Then I ask you why should not we. We are not allowed to exercise it . . . we *shall*.

"Collectivism has attempted to destroy us, let us destroy *it*, if our demands are not allowed. Never within the history of the human race did such an opportunity exist for the development of equality. And what came of it? Nothing! Because the system was opposed to all human instincts. Can we place an artist on the same level as a husbandman? Is a farmer the intellectual equal of a novelist, whose pen-pictures strike home to the heart and mind? No! But I need not particularise. Collectivism has been impartial it is true, but sadly unsuccessful.

"Humanity is synonymous with individualism. Personality must exercise its powers after its own individual lights, and follow its own course. Mark Glimson and I have been proposed as members of the Convention. We ask you to elect us, and we will strike at the evil, root and branch. We will proclaim the folly of the present State, and demand its re-organization. Here, in this country—our home, we shall again breathe the air of freedom, and once more have full scope for individual action. To all this we have a claim, a just claim, and we mean eventually to obtain our rights."

A glow of enthusiasm overspread Ingleton's face as he continued:—

"Friends, I have not put you on oath,"—(Glimson was watching the audience with a look

of curiosity on his face; Pelham Stocking was doing the same with some anxiety)—"for that were futile; if anyone intended to betray us, he would do so notwithstanding. If you are true to your honour, you will not need an oath. In conclusion, I say this: Let our aspirations be as high as the human mind can soar. Let our duty to our fellowmen be done, even at the cost of life; and let our motto be Individuality. Let the banner be carried proudly and honourably; let every action of our lives prove the good purpose of our individual aims. But withal, action without precipitation, prudence without timidity, and no retreat, is my counsel to you all, in the great strife that will soon come."

He descended from the pulpit.

Glimson immediately mounted.

"Friends," he said, "this is no place for us to stay in. For more than one reason, my words shall be few. Collectivism and corruption are synonymous. What we require is Individualism and Liberty; bastard liberty it has been called; but it is a more legitimate offspring of man's brain than that unification such as we understand it at the present day. What you must do, what I must do, what we must all do, is to disseminate our opinions, and form a great party, with whom action shall be of more import than speech. To this end we must be willing to sacrifice our lives. Progress is the ultimate aim of man's existence. We have made no progress these twenty-five years.

Why not? The policy of our times has prevented it. Well, let us build up a new polity, let us search the pages of history for the best constitution, and the best policy for humanity. But above all, let us act decisively and with precision. If necessary, let us make forced marches like Napoleon, or map out our course like Moltke. Indecision would mean our downfall. If anyone wavers let him retreat at once."

They all remained silent.

"Good," continued Glimson, "you have now thrown your lot in with ours. Disseminate our ideas; and of every friend you make keep us informed. I propose that James Ingleton be our accepted leader. All who agree thus, let them hold up their hands." All hands went up. "If anyone wish to address the assembly, let him do so." Then Glimson descended.

Arthur Caland took the place which Glimson had vacated. In his quiet, yet impassioned manner, he said,—

"Friends—we are all friends here—as the stars shine in spite of the mist which now hides them, so there exists the power of individuality. What is life without freedom? What is this existence—being driven like a flock of sheep, thus far, and by such a road, and no questions to be asked? Our manhood has been undermined in this soul-killing vacuum which is called the Social State. Who then cares for life such as this, for the mere existence of the brute beast. The time has not yet arrived, but it *will*,

and sooner than most people think, when we shall build a new England, leaving the old one to rot and decay, as the very church in which we now stand. Friends, before all, remember the number—one, that is the unit. Collectivism possesses no conscience, man does. If you think you are doing wrong, ask your consciences, and be guided by the answer. The near future will not be one we can paint with roseate hues. It looms black and gloomy as the grave. No matter; those who emerge from this struggle shall have glorious victory. Whoever distributed those pamphlets did well. They have been read, and well read. I propose that Mark Glimson be accepted as second in command."

A show of hands decided in favour of Glimson.

Caland was about to descend when some persons were heard to enter the building. In a moment all were on their feet, and the word "Discovered" passed round. Heughin hastily turned the lights out, leaving all in total darkness.

"Who is there?" shouted Glimson.

"A friend," was the answer.

"What name?" asked Glimson.

"Martin Hampden," came the answer.

"Who else?" said Glimson.

"Norris Buerlin," came from another voice.

"Good! turn on the light," said Glimson; and this being done, the two entered the circle of light, taking up their stand near a column.

"You are both welcome," said Ingleton, as Caland descended the pulpit. "What brings you so late?"

"I come from Manchester," said Buerlin.

"And I from Birmingham," said Hampden.

Bligow now ascended the pulpit.

"Friends, he said, "I am no speaker, so I will bring my proposals forward at once. We require a watchword; a future duty to perform; and a place of meeting. Then we want a secretary; and above all, we must return Ingleton and Glimson as members of the Convention."

His place was immediately taken by Buerlin, who said, "I am willing to act as secretary."

"Agreed," they murmured, and he stepped down.

A dozen watchwords were proposed, but ultimately "Honour," suggested by Pelham Stocking was accepted.

Ingleton again ascended the pulpit.

"We have a duty to fulfil," he said. "The first is to gain members to our cause. Can we count upon fifty for each man present now?"

"Send one man to assist me and you can rely upon a thousand, in Birmingham, in forty-eight hours," said Hampden, with a decision which was convincing.

"Manchester will respond with as many in a week," said Buerlin. "I and others there will spread the dissatisfaction."

"You can command fifty telephone operatives through me," said Streathan.

"I could find as many men, and a dozen cars," said Heughin.

"Enough," said Ingleton. "I see you are in earnest."

"Deadly earnest," interposed Glimson; "yes, deadly earnest."

"Will you assist at making us members of the Convention?" Ingleton resumed.

"Yes," came the answer, loud and unmistakable.

"In eleven days the election takes place," continued Ingleton. "Much will have occurred by then. Rouse your friends. You have done me great honour by choosing me as leader, I shall strive to be worthy of the position."

Glimson rose, and from the steps he said, "As you have made me second in command, I do not feel strong enough to uphold such an appointment without the assistance of every one present. I bid you follow our leader through thick and thin. I am an opportunist in ideas. If the cloak of the mist can assist us, let us take advantage of it; let us take advantage of the first opportunity which presents itself. On the first occasion, whenever and however it may be, if the high and mighty, the ridiculous Government, order us about, let us refuse to obey; whoever it may be, let him refuse, and then we shall rise and second him. Some one must prove a martyr to the cause: as lief myself as anyone. But remember we must be prepared at any.

moment. A general rising of the members of the Alliance will destroy the Government."

Pelham Stocking rose for the first time, and addressed the conspirators. In the blandest tones he said, "Friends, I wish to say but a few words, and they are well meant. Our cause is just, our cause is honourable: it is the enfranchisement of the nation from a slavery; but—and remember I mean well—the military and the police are very powerful; it is useless to jump into the lion's mouth all unarmed as we are."

George Cavendish, without moving from his seat, said, "Many of my friends are in the army. Numerous cases of dissatisfaction have already been reported. We do not fear the army."

Herbert Hollis said, "In open resistance the police are powerless.

"We," said Perkins, speaking for his two friends, "could loosen the roof of London, and destroy an army with the pieces."

"An aerial car loaded with iglio-powder would destroy London," said Willie Heughin.

"A hundred gallons of water and the possession of one electric storage house, could resist the world," said William Wharham.

"With the possession of an engine-shop, and an electrician who could make the bullets, we could turn out a thousand guns a day; could we not?" said Edward Vickers, addressing the question to his friends.

"Yes," answered Dixon and Hardale.

"Leave the leyden jars for me," said Wharham.

"If we brought the nozzle of an air pump into the city we could disperse ten thousand men in ten minutes," said Fitzwalter, who belonged to that department.

"I am sufficiently answered," said Stocking, seating himself.

"We have forgotten our elders," said Ingleton.

"They must join us," said Glimson.

"They *will* join us," said Bligow.

"Now as to a future policy," said Ingleton. "I propose a constitutional monarchy on the best lines."

"Who is to be king?" asked Buerlin.

"A scion of the Guelphs," answered Ingleton.

"I have no objection," said Glimson.

"Nor I," said Bligow.

"Nor I," said Heughin; and the rest followed.

"Whenever you find a communication signed 'Honour,' it is from us," said Glimson, with emphasis.

"Is there any proposal to be made?" said Ingleton.

No one wishing to do so, he took a small book from his pocket, and a pen and ink bottle, and offering then to Buerlin, said—"Let all record their names and addresses."

Buerlin took the names of all present, and then they made their preparations for departure.

"Those who live at the further end of the town had better accompany me; I have a car in readiness that will hold a dozen," said Heughin.

This invitation was accepted; while others, first shaking hands with Ingleton and Glimson, slowly departed. The echoing footsteps resounded as, one by one, they left the church.

"A most successful meeting," said Glimson to Ingleton.

"Yes," answered he, as Glimson, Bligow, Stocking, and he, left together, bidding Heughin good night.

Heughin took the two lamps in his hands, and turning round they lit up the corners of the old church. "This way," he said, motioning to a door, which was opened with difficulty. "This leads to the turret where the car waits." Leading them, they slowly ascended the mouldering and moss-grown stairs, awaking the spiders who had lived there many years undisturbed, and crushing the creeping insects with every footstep.

The weird sound of the bell re-echoed on the winding stairs. At last they reached the summit, and then Heughin, handing the lamps to someone, forced open a window and gave a shrill whistle. In a moment it was answered, and the noise of a descending car was heard. Wilkins was standing with a door open. "Throw out a gangboard," said Heughin.

Wilkins pushed a board to the ledge of the

window and then threw two ropes to Heughin, who fixed them at each side casement. "Now, come; walk over and hold the ropes, but don't look downwards."

This uninviting pathway was accepted with some temerity; but all fear was assuaged when Wilkins, getting out, walked forward and backward to the car. He having re-entered, the others crossed in safety.

Heughin passed the board back; knotting the ropes together, and forming a loop with them, he sat himself in this cradle and shouted, "Clear! Throw a ladder down." The car shot away with Heughin swinging underneath. For a moment it seemed as though he must lose his balance and fall shattered to pieces, as a reward for this act of daring. But a rope ladder falling in front of him, he caught it with his teeth, and so steadied himself. With a grip of iron he grasped the ladder. He was trying to find a foothold. This done, he climbed as nimbly as a monkey, and entered the car, pulling the rope and ladder behind him, closed the door, and then the car sped away.

Below, in the church, the rats and the mice, and a hundred things that infest old buildings, held their midnight revelry, to the clanging of the cracked bell in the turret.

CHAPTER XVII.

In the blindness of his hatred, Pelham Stocking had spread the net—very finely spun, so he though —for his enemies. But to his great dismay he found *himself* entangled in its meshes, instead of those on whose destruction he had so long gloated in anticipation. The truth of this came home to him as he was on his way back from the secret meeting. He cursed the luck that had caused Mark Glimson to find him in a swoon, and he trembled at the thought of what his waking words may have been. He had written many pamphlets at Glimson's dictation, and realized that he was in his enemies' power. He had spoken at the meeting, trusting to discourage them, but the overwhelming assurances had overpowered him.

He had taken leave of the others, ostensibly to go home. Home! It was but a mockery, for he could find no rest. So he walked on, fate leading him to the river side. He watched the current flowing placidly along, but its peacefulness brought no rest to his mind. He was irreligious. He said, "I do not believe," which was illogical, for it acknowledged that there was something to be disbelieved. At the same time he was superstitious—a sign of weakness. He shrugged his shoulders at

the All-powerful, and trembled at the wind blowing through the trees. He had had three strokes of ill luck, and half feared the time was no longer propitious for him to commit further mischief. But the idea of ultimate triumph led him on. He sat down on a parapet and glanced into the stream. In his egoism he sneered at nature. He conned over in his mind the past night's proceedings. Not a flaw could he find which he could turn to account. To betray others would be to betray himself. He felt like a man who has attempted to draw others in a trap, and hears its doors close upon himself. He anathematized everything, above and below. He would have liked to give a stab in the dark, and to hurry off ere the hue and cry could be raised, but he felt that he was powerless to act. In this incapacity he cried with spite and mortification. Again he rehearsed the meeting. Was there not some point of which he could reap advantage. He wiped the tears from his eyes, and sprang to his feet, his eyes gleaming with malice. He had found it! Glimson had said, "Let them resist the State on the earliest opportunity." That was the trumpet sound which seemed to beckon him on.

If he could get Ingleton and Glimson incarcerated before they had time to marshal their forces, they would be destroyed. His paroxysm of rage was over. He felt he had them in his power. In his mind he prepared for them a yawning chasm, and he already saw them fall headlong into it. The

sardonic smile returned to his face, and he gave vent to a malicious laugh. The emotions cause a diversity of expression. From the depths of despair Stocking found himself lifted up until he viewed humanity from the mountain tops. The men below seemed but a mere set of playthings; and again he laughed.

Thus recovered, he strolled along the river bank till he came to a piece of statuary supported by four Caryatides and four Atlantes. Between two of these supports sat a man. Stocking addressed him.

"What are you doing here?"

"That is my concern," was the answer in gruff tones.

"You are very impolite," said Stocking.

"Eh!" was the answer.

"Don't you think it unhealthy to sit here?" said Stocking.

"Do you?" answered the man.

"Yes."

"You did the same."

"It is of no use talking to you," said Stocking as he turned away. Twice he faced homewards; but the tide was running out to sea; the sight seemed to fascinate him; he continued walking.

The man who was seated between the priestesses of Egypt got up, and muttered, "My name isn't Jenkins if I didn't see you here before to-night," and walked home.

We have met him before by daylight as an officer of the Court of Justice.

Stocking continued walking till he arrived at a series of broad steps which led to the water's edge. He descended slowly, and knocked his shoulders against a statue of Pollux, whose companion, Castor, stood opposite. "Curse it," muttered Stocking, "the same bad luck as that night." As he touched the water with his foot, he stared at it, as though he would mesmerize it, but the opposite took place. Two stones around which the eddies flowed, became transformed into eyes. Slowly the current assumed a bodily form. He would have fallen but for the support of a rail. He was transfixed. His eyes sank and his eyelids closed. In this attitude he remained for a moment, then his eyes reopened—they had an unearthly glitter. Walking backwards but without the slightest indecision, he re-ascended the steps, and then re-descended them, his eyes still fixed on the water. As he touched the lowest step he put his arms out as if he pushed something in the stream. To his ears, the lapping of the water against the step resembled the splash created by a falling body.

For a moment he remained staring at the water, the tide seeming to carry something out. Then he turned round, shuddered, and cautiously retraced his steps and walked home in a sort of somnambulic sleep, stopping every now and then to look behind him. Once in his room, he directly went to bed and

dreamed again the dreams we have already related.

The attractive power of a spot where some foul deed has occurred, both to the active participators in the scene, and to man in general, seems an inexplicable quantity with which it is impossible to deal.

So to the student of mankind, moribund curiosity, the wish to see evil, if not to perform it, seems an entity too difficult to explain, and yet always existed. Thus the sons of the past, the fleeting moments of present, prove that mankind has never changed; and, as a like result, that man will never change. From the first blood-deed of Cain, to the last murder that the newspapers chronicle, man has remained the same. When the human vices are given free vent, a reign of terror results. Reason is destroyed, and pandemonium let loose. If the evil natures of some were allowed free scope, the quintessence of their aspiration would be a tempest of blood, with the dying gasp of humanity as the sighing wind. They who preach virtue as the narrow winding path, and vice as the broad paved way, are mistaken. The inert germ of evil is a part of the brute creation, and when found in man, presents a maze of fiendish cruelty combined with tortuous paths of cunning, proving that there are as many obstacles in the path of vice as in that of virtue.

When Pandoras' box was opened, evil in all forms and shapes entered the world. Thus taught the heathen mythologist. Hope alone remained at the bottom; aye, hope! and that was all. Hope on, it is

well; but for that gift, the philosophers would have despaired of the regeneration of mankind. Rosy cheeked, blithsome hope. Hope on, hope for the redemption of the human race, hope for the eradication of the evil spirit in man. Hope on—that is all.

* * * *

From the evening of the lecture to the date of of the election was a matter of eleven days, each full of interest to the student of history. Not wishing to present the reader with a quotation from Buerlin's Chronicle, we will instead give that celebrated historian's diary of those few days. This diary was found a few years ago in the ruins of a house at Manchester; but now charred and blackened, it fills an honourable position in the Royal Library.

"October 22. Returned from London last night. Meeting most successful. Shall set to work at once. Alfred Egan and Thomas Stovell will assist. Elections on first. Glimson and Ingleton should get in. Saw our candidate; speak at to-morrow's meeting for him. Was in Birmingham at two o'clock. Hampden hard at it; got a committee. Paper, first edition, notes that at 7.48 Stamkoff, President of Russian Republic, died. (There will be trouble there). Nothing else all day, except the labour and impost questions. Dined with Dr. Shindle—here on special obesity case—reports city quiet. Rumour of mutiny in regiment in Newcastle (more trouble for Govern-

ment). At labour bureau, hundreds waiting for work.

"October 23. Spoke at meeting; put my head in lion's mouth; our candidate joins cause. Had long talk with Egan and Stovell. Will have a hundred pamphlets out by to-morrow—photographic process. Have written to Ingleton; proposed secret cypher, too simple to find out for use, in telephone. Glimson writes, 'Hard at work, more pamphlets out in London.' Met Mr. Bostwell, is here on circuit; evidently is with us; must write to Glimson about it. Was at Bristol and Plymouth; a few adherents in each town; work progresses. France is disturbed; civil war feared; royalty again fled. Govinni new Prime Minister of Italy. Great storms in America. The impost question will evidently come before the Convention when it meets. The result will be a cataclysm.

"October 24. Last night I wrote 'the result will be a cataclysm,' and it is impossible to foresee how soon it will happen. Arthur Caland was arrested on a charge of insubordination. Half London ceased work, such a stir it created. He spoke disrespectfully of his overseer; was discharged with a caution, and taken home in a grand procession by a thousand members of the Alliance—this was four o'clock. At six, two hundred fresh pamphlets were blown by the wind in the streets of London. (I already hear the people destroying the State). Glimson sent me a copy; it is very strong language. I'll have had it

reproduced immediately. Hampden got my cypher, and has five hundred with him already. I, with Egan and Stovell, count on three hundred now. They both spoke at the Alliance with closed doors (it may lead to trouble). Have been travelling all over the country; credit card will soon be exhausted; must write to Ingleton to see how to obtain fresh when it is used up. There is something in the air everywhere. The Chinese are again in revolt. In France the palaces and official residences have been blown up, and Brantine is at the head of affairs. The provision committee will not last long. . . . To-morrow's paper will be of interest, for Glimson will get an actor to speak some lines on Collectivism."

Between the leaves we found the copy of a pamphlet in the broad handwriting of Mark Glimson; we append it here:—"Men and Women, how long shall you be trampled in the dust? How long shall your liberty be denied by an illogical hateful government? To-day, an example of the cursed system under which you live—not thrive—has been brought home to you. Do you realise that you are an army, not of men and women—living useful beings, but of automatic toys? Do you realise that a fellow being has been almost deprived of his freedom because of his openness of speech? Do you intend to uphold this degrading and wretched life? Lying and deceitful statements will be made to palliate the evil that has been done. Do not believe them, do not trust them. Do not be pacified by vain assurances, but destroy

the curse, root and branch. Truth will out, and liberty cries from the bowels of the earth to the heights of heaven. Awake! Awake! Watch and wait."

"October 25. Glimson's moves have decidely irritated the Government. . . . The *Half Hour* has a column on the gag in 'Family Feuds.' Strange that no comment is made about the pamphlets. We are progressing. Manchester 600, Birmingham 700. Bligow went to Plymouth and Bristol this morning. Reported about 300 in each town. . . . In analysing public feeling, I conclude that the majority are with us, London especially. The fifty telephone operators are with us as promised. We could disconnect communication at any moment. No opposition has yet been offered to Ingleton's and Glimson's election. We are making history rapidly. Discontent is everywhere. The cotton operators are rising. . . .

"October 26. Sunday being a day of rest, there is little to chronicle. The twenty four editions of the *Half Hour* are read eagerly. We are still in the van. . . . The situation in the north speaks well for us. . . . Ireland presents the spectacle of another famine. The Iberian Peninsula is in straitened circumstances (for once in the way). Professor Holmes has completed his survey of the sub-oceanic globe. The monsters of the deep stand revealed, so it is presumed. The last letter from Hemsrik is headed one degree from the pole. (Will

he reach it?) Labour disputes are disturbing Berlin. Are we to expect another 1848?"

The twenty-seventh was evidently one of much work for it is headed 3 a.m., October 27:—"Science has not yet enslaved the elements. A cyclone has swept half the hemisphere. The aerial cars ascended to three miles above the storm; the scene was stupendous. Travelled to Glasgow and back; addressed a meeting. Ingleton was there. The old Canongate served a good purpose. Heughin undertakes to provide a dozen cars, and men to steer them, at any moment. (Awfully tired.) Have now 600 with us. Hampden has got his 1,000. Altogether our numerical strength is about 10,000. (The secretarial duties lax my powers. No less than fifty letters came.) Have had them addressed to different persons to allay suspicion. Elections are now in sight, canvassing in full swing. Glimson concludes his letters with 'Messieurs, beware!' No time to examine newspapers:

"October 28. More progress. London has set a brave example. When the blow falls it will shatter the idol, which has been worshipped for a century and more: Glimson grows bolder every moment. Bligow is more energetic than ever. A new creed was preached to-day, that of the Crystal feeders as they call themselves. The theory is peculiar. To live on vapours does not satisfy the stomach, at least not mine. . . . The London secretary of the Alliance has demanded the policies of all

candidates. Is the Alliance going to officially recommend members? Somewhat late in the day. Shall wait the result. Wholesale emigration is again proposed as a remedy for the bad times. (*Half Hour* is rubbish.) Emigration as a panacea has never been so successful as to deserve recommendation. The Congo State has entered upon a fresh session—a new lease of life. . . . The arid regions of Peru have been successfully watered by the establishment of electric pressure stations. The proposal of bridging the Atlantic strikes me as a useless work. We can get across quickly enough. The plan comes from the west. The idea is certainly unique. A tube resting on air balls! Seems the height of extravagance. Besides, travelling by pneumatic pressure has been tried before. Foreign affairs show no sign of improvement.

"October 29. Ingleton and Glimson's election is now assured—12 out of 184 will support them if they are returned. The work is increasing. Two meetings were held in London to-day. The Senate met this morning. Business not disclosed. A most remarkable incident is the publication of Ocken's travels in Central Africa. Albert Guelph it seems lives on the Zambesi. His family appears not to be recognized by the *Half Hour*, or by Ocken, who is a Dane. Ocken speaks highly of Guelph and his Government. This information will come useful. . . . In France, matters are still serious; should not be surprised if the king were recalled.

The troubles have come to an end in Russia. Poland has been reconstituted a kingdom under Leczinsky, said to be a descendant of John Sobieski. Russia proper has been dissected. Finland has joined the Scandinavian Kingdom; and southern Russia has become a distinct Empire under Louis, Prince of Sebastopol. If Said-Ami had had his eyes open, he would have taken a slice off this part of Europe. . . . I should not be surprised if the Hebrews were ere long to declare for a distinct autonomy, for according to the *Half Hour* they are grumbling. Palestine has already revived some of its ancient glories."

We find that the page headed October 30th has been carefully torn in halves; the upper half we reproduce; evidently the lower contained something compromising. This is what it says: "October 30. Too tired to write much, but shall preserve newspapers every day. G and B hard at work. H in B works very hard; we can get plenty of tools. It is almost time to write to A G. Have got Ocken's book. War is declared in Afghanistan. Wonder why." (Here the page is torn.)

"October 31. Another twelve hours will decide matters, (sorry must remain here). Dissatisfaction increases. In France, Committee of Public Safety has declared for the return of king, who is in Madrid (thought so). Rumoured that Said-Ami is dead; if so, Mahommedan kingdom will split. Russia—the last member of the Romanoff dynasty died at 9.43.

An attempt will be made, according to the American statements, to melt the pole. Ridiculous! Proposed to erect series of sun glasses at angles from the equator to pole. Will the transmitted heat travel quickly enough? (The next thing will be a tunnel through the globe I suppose). Another princeling born in Austria. Govinni made great speech in Italian Parliament. What will to-morrow bring? I am anxious."

Age and smoke had blackened the entries for November 1st. to that extent, that but a few disjoined sentences can be read, which it would be futile to reproduce.

As we copied these entries, the present obliterated itself, and the past is re-enacted before us in the scenes in the kinteograph. The pen trembled as we wrote the words, for the shades of the great men whose history is so briefly written here, seem to surround us. For a moment they apparently live again, speaking and doing as was their wont in life. But the hours are numbered, and the days draw rapidly to a close. Forward! then, forward! before the sands of time run out.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was the first production of "Cottonopolis," and the Thalia Theatre was crowded with an eagerly expectant audience. As the nearest phono-chronometer bawled forth eight, the curtain rose, and the first scene in the new play, depicting an old English homestead, was presented to view. That, and the subsequent tableaux, illustrating various incidents in nineteenth century life, had been re-produced with an artistic finish, and a faithful attention to the nearest detail that quite equalled the consummate realism of the Victorian stage. But the acting did not rise to such a high standard of perfection. The piece was a studied, a clever, facile performance, but it lacked the fire of the great actors of bygone times.

Like the work done in other branches of art, the acting seemed more the unconscious fruit of systematic drilling, than the outcome of individual genius. And it was but natural that it should be so. The drama, like its sister arts of music and painting, has ever found its noblest exponents in those whom the necessities of the hour have spurred on to exert their individual gifts to the utmost. But in the social state everyone had his toast so kindly buttered by the all-protecting Government, that the

temptation proved too much for weak human nature. Artists, like other men, succumbed to the all prevading Nirwâna into which every section of the people had been plunged. What they produced was done in the calm, methodical, listless sort of way of men who worked, but as it were for pastime, well knowing that, however little they produced, the State was bound to support them. Not theirs—the fire of a Kemble or a Keane, the godlike enthusiasm of a Wagner, the poetic fervour of a Goethe or a Burns. In the age of monotony it was but meet that even the sacred fire of the muses should burn with a dulled, subdued, radiance.

The play over, the audience, painfully calm, excruciatingly sedate and respectable, filed out along the corridors—the walls of which had been thoughtfully extended immediately on the descent of the curtain.

Above the mingled din, and scraps of conversation, and the shuffling of feet on the terraced steps of the theatre, there came suddenly the piercing shrill notes of a child's voice. It was little Georgie Berthon, who, accompanied by her mother and Blanche, had, with her quick young eyes, espied James Ingleton in the crowd.

"Oh, Auntie," cried she, with childish excitement, "there is that nice man, do let us speak to him."

Fortunately Ingleton happened to turn his face at that moment in the direction of the ladies, and

recognising them, he threaded his way through the crowd, followed by his sister Nellie.

The latter and Blanche were soon on the most friendly terms together. Indeed, they felt towards one another that mutual attraction which frequently proves an enduring bond of union between two kindred natures, for such they were, and both equally sympathetic, lovable, refined, and womanly in the highest meaning of the word.

But the terrace of a theatre, within an hour of midnight, is scarcely the best adapted spot for prolonged conversation. So, after an interchange of greetings, Ingleton and his sister took leave of the two ladies and Georgie, and entering the electric transports, all were soon again at ease at home.

A few days after the production of "Cottonopolis," at the Thalia, Ingleton called upon Blanche with a message from his sister, who wished her to spend the evening with her. He found Blanche in the sitting room reading "*All sorts and conditions of men.*"

"You like Besant's works,' said Ingleton.

"Very much," she replied. "Those pictures of old London life are so fascinating. I often think there must have been much more picturesqueness in those days than now.

"You are right," he answered. "There certainly was. True, there was also a good deal of wretchedness and misery. But such as there were, were all

born of ignorance, for none had need to exist. With a thorough education, provided free for every person in the land, with one equal chance to all to raise themselves to higher spheres by their earnest work; with adequate provision made for those who, through age or infirmity, could not toil, and due punishment meted out to those who would not, poverty and degradation would have been minimised, without having to go to such lengths in levelling as has been done in our days. 'Tis that that has killed poetry; the chill breath of Collectivism has done it."

After that both were silent for a brief space, as though equally at a loss how to continue the thread of their conversation.

Then he lifted his eyes from the open book on the settee before him, and fixing them upon her, he resumed in a voice that shook with a very unusual tremour—"But, still, *all* poetry has not been destroyed, the poetry of love is still with us as it was with those who lived before us; and . . . and . . . Miss Collingwood . . . Blanche . . .

The halting words ceased suddenly, for with his eyes still fixed on her features, he noticed her turning deathly pale; so completely had all the colour left her that he felt terribly alarmed; and springing to his feet he felt her hands. They were cold as ice; and then, quickly glancing up at her, he saw she had swooned. He looked about him, and on the little walnut table he noticed a tiny flask. Quickly he took it up, and removing the stopper,

found it was filled with a pungent liquid scent. Kneeling down by her side he poured some of its contents on his hand, and with it proceeded vigorously to chafe Blanche's temple and wrists.

It was several minutes—a period which to him seemed endless—ere she once more regained consciousness. Slowly the colour returned to her cheeks, and her eyes met his with a questioning look.

"How you did alarm me. I am glad you have come to, at last," he began.

"I fainted then, did I?" she asked, with some confusion.

"Indeed you did. Fortunately I found something in that flagon which must have helped to restore you?"

"Ah! yes, that is toilet vinegar. It is an excellent restorative. But really I must have given you a deal of trouble. I am so sorry."

"Pray don't," he quickly interposed. "Say nothing about the trouble; I only hope you are quite yourself again."

"Oh, yes," she answered reassuringly. I am not at all subject to such attacks. I have quite recovered now."

"If you *have*, but only on that condition, I have to ask you, for my sister Nell, if you will spend the evening with her. I shall be most happy to be your escort home."

"Oh, yes, I shall be very glad to go, if you will kindly wait here while I change my dress."

With this she rose, and once more assuring him that she would not let him wait long, she left the room, he holding the door open for her to pass out.

Left to himself, Ingleton began to muse, and asked himself wonderingly what he could have said to have caused Blanche to faint. He failed to find the slightest clue, and was still pondering when Blanche returned to the room ready to accompany him home.

Before long they both left the house, and were soon on their way to Utopia Terrace. But whether it was that she had not fully recovered from her recent swoon, or that she was ill, they had not proceeded very far before she felt herself too exhausted to continue the walk, and she told Ingleton so. But as she would not hear of returning to her home, the thought struck him to hail a transport and ride to the park, where, it being a fine afternoon, Blanche could rest awhile.

They entered the car, and within another quarter of an hour they were seated on a bench in a secluded part of the park.

Both had been silent awhile, when Ingleton asked her if she was feeling better.

"Yes," she replied, "I feel stronger again. Another ten minutes rest and I shall no doubt be quite able to walk to your house. Perhaps the walk will even invigorate me. 'Twas but a passing weakness, that is all."

Ingleton again pondered, and asked himself

whether any words of his could have so disturbed her. But again his memory failed to account for it in any way whatever. Then he made up his mind to ask her to assure him on that point, and commenced:

"My dear Miss Collingwood, I am sure I need not tell you that I feel very uneasy at seeing you so unwell, and I cannot help fearing that something I may have said to you this afternoon has been the indirect cause of it. If that is so, I am really sorry."

"Not at all, Mr. Ingleton," she answered assuringly. "I can scarcely account for it myself."

He felt somewhat more at his ease. But still he could not for a moment find words to give shape to the thoughts that were in him.

After a pause he seemed to make an effort, and then he remarked:—"If, as you assure me, my words of this afternoon did not have any disturbing effect upon you, will you permit me to finish what I was then about to say. Miss Collingwood," he continued, again in halting, broken sentences, "Miss Collingwood . . . 'tis true, it is . . . but a very short time that . . . I have had the pleasure . . . of . . . your acquaintance, and therefore . . . what I am about . . . to say . . . may appear to you . . . very much . . . of a liberty on my part. But short as the time . . . has been . . . it . . . has amply sufficed . . . for me . . . to be deeply . . . sensible of the charm of you presence.

"Miss Collingwood," he continued—and now his voice was steadier, the halting tones grew firmer, and with flushed cheeks and kindled eyes he added —"I am not an adept at neat phrases, or in saying complimentary nothings. I have associated most of my time with my own sex, and my thoughts have hitherto dwelt on sterner subjects than the gentle theme of love. But yet, Miss Collingwood . . . Blanche . . . I am not invulnerable; you have conquered me, I place a life's devotion at your feet. Do with it what you will."

He ceased, and waited for her to reply.

Blanche was overcome completely with what she had heard. It was all so sudden, so unexpected, and some moments elapsed ere she could sufficiently recover herself to speak. Then, with heaving bosom, flushed cheeks, and eyes aglow with feeling, she spoke:

"Mr. Ingleton, what you have said, has, you may believe me, caused me very great surprise. 'Tis true, as you say, we have known one another but a brief time. Yet, I, too, can sufficiently understand and appreciate your character to be well aware that you do not care for hollow platitudes, and therefore I need not tell you that you have paid me a great compliment. For in that light a girl must always look upon the avowal of a man's honourable devotion. But upon this I will not dwell, although I am deeply sensible of it. I may however say this much, that on my part, I have observed that yours

is not an ordinary nature, and one that must impress a woman who thinks. Mr. Ingleton, I will not, I cannot, say more at present. Do not expect it of me in this moment. But I do promise you," in a voice that sounded to Ingleton's ears as singularly sweet and gentle, "that I will give you my whole mind, my every attention, to that which you have said to me, and on a future occasion you may have my answer."

Ingleton felt somewhat disappointed. He had expected a more decisive answer. He disliked vacillation and hesitation in anything; but although with some awkwardness, he could not help returning to the subject.

"Miss Collingwood . . . Blanche, I do not wish to be too importunate, but one certainty I would fain have. Have I a rival?"

The question seemed to affect her in an extraordinary way. For again she turned very pale, and in a tremulous voice she answered,—

"Your question recalls to my mind bitter memories, and I hardly know how to answer you."

"Then I fear that it is as I thought, that I am not your first suitor. Perhaps you have already pledged yourself," he added in a dejected tone.

She hung her head in silence; and after a pause, when Ingleton furtively glanced at her, he noticed that her eyes were moist with gathering tears. He could not resist the impulse, and gently took her hand in his. She did not withdraw it, and he felt

it trembling violently within his own. Her agitation made him feel very ill at ease, and with a diffident eagerness he hastened to ask her to forgive him if may be he had unconsciously hurt her.

She did not reply at once, but after a while, gently withdrawing her hand, she said:

"You said nothing that could have hurt me, and there is no need for you to ask my pardon. 'Tis not your fault that your words did bring back to my mind a passage from my past life, which, if I but could, I would gladly forget. But," she continued, with a sudden return of her usual bright vivacious manner, "I will not play with your feelings. That is always unfitting in a woman, and much more so would it be for me to do so in the present case, well knowing as I do, and appreciating your deeply thoughtful and earnest nature. Mr. Ingleton . . . James," . . . she continued, and her voice was soft and low, "James, as I have already said, the past, with its ever recurring memories, weighs heavily on my mind. Do not, I pray you, at this moment ask me to reveal it to you. I cannot, I may not now. I can only hope that the day may not be distant when I can speak. And then you shall be the first, the only one whom I will take into my confidence. Let it be sufficient for you to know that I have made a great effort, so that at least, for the present, I can draw a veil over the scenes and memories which I would fain thrust away from me for ever. And . . . you will pardon my agitation . . . I . . .

yes, I consent . . . I . . . will think of you as my future husband.

Ingleton felt a thrill of intense joy; and he glanced up at her blushing face with eyes beaming with happiness. For Ingleton, though in every sense a noble type of intellectual manhood—albeit, his mind was ever full of the loftiest aspirations—was not less than so many noble minds, at other times keenly susceptible to the gentle influences of a true hearted, womanly girl, and felt that no mightier impetus could be given to his noble, unselfish ambition then the inspirating encouragement of so lovable a being as Blanche.

Once again he took her hand in his, and drawing her towards him, kissed her tenderly as he whispered, "Dearest, henceforth, every hour of my existence, every deed I may undertake, shall be sanctified by the gentle influence of my love for you."

For a brief while they remained seated, hand-in-hand, in that silence which, to those who truly love, is more eloquent, more expressive, than any speech.

Then Blanche reminded him of her promise to visit his sister, and feared the time was speeding on.

They rose from the seat, and walked on together silently until they had reached the park gates. There they entered a transport, and it was not long before they found themselves at Utopia Terrace.

Nellie Ingleton received Blanche with a genial warmth which well became her generous character, and as might be expected, in a very short time the events of the afternoon in the park formed the subject of their girlish conversation, and Blanche received the cordial felicitations of her new found friend and future sister.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Ingleton, who with all her eccentricity and queer old-world notions, was possessed, in a marked degree, of those acute powers of perception which usually grow together with the instincts of maternity, in so far as the interests of its offspring are concerned, had not failed to observe that something unusual had occurred to her son, or else, why those flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes?

Moved by her affectionate impulses, she approached Ingleton, and drawing him aside, asked him what it was that gave him such an animated appearance.

Ingleton, who in his devoted love for his mother, entirely forgot her narrow-minded prejudices and perscribed mental vision, did not hesitate for a moment, but poured forth into her willing ears the whole story of his love for Blanche and her acceptance of his devotion. When he had finished, she kissed him tenderly, and then making her way to where Blanche was seated talking to Nellie, affectionately embraced her future daughter.

All at once the tremulous, weary tones of Katie's

voice was heard, as she asked who it was that had just been speaking.

"'Tis your new sister, Blanche, dearie," said Nellie, as she gently smoothered the pillow on which the poor little sufferer's head was resting.

"Let me talk to my new sister then, Nellie dear," she replied in tones of petulant eagerness.

Blanche, who had overheard the words, quickly approached the couch, and taking the child's thin little hand in hers, kissed it tenderly, as she whispered, "I am your new sister, dear."

"Let me kiss you then, will you," Katie answered, and her words sounded pleading and affectionate.

Blanche bent down over her, and the well-nigh colourless lips, the youthful, yet careworn little mouth, met Blanche's cheeks in a tender, loving kiss, that showed how much latent affection there was hidden within that frail suffering little frame.

"Your voice sounds sweet and gentle. I think you will be a dear, good sister to me," she said; then, after a moment, taking Blanche's hand in hers, she added in a voice of unconscious pathos, "But I fear you will have to bear with a deal of bother from me, for I am very troublesome at times, and not always good."

"Never fear, dear," answered Blanche, as the tears gathered in her eyes, "you shall always find in me a dear, loving sister, ever ready to talk to you and amuse you."

For awhile longer Blanche sat by the side of Katie's couch, then she took an affectionate farewell of her; and after exchanging a few words of greeting with Nell and Mrs. Ingleton, she left, her *fiancé* escorting her home.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE day of the elections dawned with hoar frost and sullen sky. In London, nothing unusual presented itself by reason of there being but two candidates and only two offices to fill. At the dining hall, surnamed the "Epicurian," (and we may note the common use of Latin and Greek titles at this period as a peculiarity), the fountain was playing with its accustomed regularity, accompanied by the drip, drip, as the tiny drops fell on the plants which surrounded the basin. At a table, upon which the usual white cloth, cruet and glasses, offered an interesting view to the hungry, sat Herbert Hollis, George Cavendish, August Beauclerc, and Francis Fitzwalter. A waiter came, and they ordered their dinners.

"It's a pity it is not livelier to-day," said Hollis, playing with his knife and fork.

"Well, last Friday was warm enough," said Cavendish," with that peculiar contraction of the eyelids known as winking.

"M' yes," answered Hollis.

"It was a glorious day," said Fitzwalter, "one long to be remembered."

"I wonder how we are getting on in the provinces," said Beauclerc.

"I saw Glimson last night," said Hollis; "he assured me we could count on a good number."

"Well, we all knew that from the last edition," said Fitzwalter with a yawn.

"I am awfully hungry," said Cavendish.

"The cravings of the inner man will soon be satisfied," said Hollis, striking his knife on a glass, and producing a ringing sound.

"I did not think Caland would get off so easily," said Beauclerc. "The general stir evidently frightened those in office. I saw Hedgeco in his office, pen in hand; and when the news of public feeling came to him, his hand trembled so that he dropped his pen. He noticed I watched him, and made a lame apology that he was subject to nervous tremors.

The three others laughed.

"They are as scared as a lot of crows," said Fitzwalter; "they are not worth a snap of the fingers."

"By-the-bye," said Cavendish, looking impatiently round for the waiter who had not yet put in an appearance, "I have been going over the defence list. We possess fifty thousand men for purposes of national defence, divided into twenty regiments, that is, five hundred in a regiment, subdivided into five companies. How long would it take to mobilize the whole body, say in London?"

"Well, say twenty-four hours," answered Hollis, almost directly.

"I know what you are thinking about," said

Beauclerc. "It would never be attempted, that is, if the movement were at all general."

"In time of invasion we could all be called upon to defend the state," said Fitzwalter.

"You mean the country," said Cavendish.

"Yes," replied Fitzwalter.

"Oh, there would be little fear. At the moment of open rebellion we could find many regiments to join our ranks," and he caused the glasses to ring from the violence of the blow he gave the table. The stomach again asserted itself, for he concluded his remark with, "When will that waiter come?"

As fortune would have it the waiter immediately came to the table, laden with eatables; and the four set to with such gusto that they soon disappeared. The meal was eaten in silence, as is the wont of Englishmen. Empires may flourish, Empires may cease, Republics may rise or succumb, ideal States may bring about changes, but all that will not destroy certain characteristics common to a class, or to the nation. The meal over, the conversation was renewed in the same low tones as before.

"The Convention meets on the 11th inst.," said Fitzwalter; "I am anxious to hear the proposal of the Senate."

"It is impossible to propose anything fresh in such a beautiful state as the one we live in," said Beauclerc with a sneer.

"The draft of Ingleton's bill will put them out of countenance," said Hollis.

"Yes, no doubt it will," said Cavendish.

"I hope he will be able to bring it in early," said Beauclerc.

"Most desirable," said Fitzwalter.

"Even if the Convention accepts it, the Senate can throw it out," said Cavendish.

"Oh, just let them do it," said Hollis.

"It will prove a crisis, an epoch in history," said Beauclerc.

"The position of affairs was never properly gauged when the social system was first introduced," said Hollis.

"No, but it is not due so much to want of that," said Fitzwalter, "as to the fact that people were absolutely tired of continual strife."

"It is very strange that, at the end of every century, there seems to set in a tide of restlessness," said Hollis.

"It is due to the superstition inherent to humanity towards the close of every century. People then are wont to believe that the end is drawing near," said Fitzwalter, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"Turning to other matters," said Beauclerc: "The cotton spinners are very much dissatisfied at the present moment."

"Buerlin has taken advantage of the agitation, I know," said Hollis.

"All due to Collectivism," said Caland, who, unseen till now, approached the table.

"Well, Arthur, how are you getting on?" said Cavendish, giving Caland his hand.

"As right as possible," he answered, shaking hands with the others, and seating himself.

"Anything fresh?" asked Hollis of him.

"Very little, except that you meet in the smoking room of the Alliance to-night," said Caland, speaking very softly.

"Rather bold, that," said Beauclerc.

"They did it in Manchester the other night," said Caland; adding, "and successfully."

"This is no place to talk in. I shall be there," said Cavendish, getting up from his seat. The others followed suit.

Once outside, Caland said, "We must remain inactive till the meeting of the Convention." They then bade him good day, and he hurried away with his usual long strides, and hands in pockets, overtaking Glimson on the way, who was critically surveying the passers by. "Hallo! Glimson," said Caland.

"Ha!" rejoined that worthy; "where do you come from?"

"The Epicurian," answered Caland.

"Anyone there?"

"Yes, Fitzwalter, Hollis, Beauclerc, and Cavendish."

"Look! I received this message this morning, through Streathan, from Buerlin," said Glimson, taking a note from his pocket and handing it to

Caland, who read it over, but could make no meaning out of it.

"What do you make of it?" said Glimson, laughing.

"Nothing,—a lot of letters," said Caland, "a cypher I suppose."

"Yes! 'Cptceoiussvaie.' You have not got an idea of it?" said Glimson.

"No," answered Caland.

"Well," said Glimson, speaking very low, and looking behind him, "it means, 'success positive.'"

"Very ingenious. Would take me an hour to solve it, if I solved it at all," said Caland.

By this time they had reached the Parade, and were facing the Alliance, when Antony came upon them breathless, and handed Glimson a note, which he hurriedly perused, and then told Caland to telephone and give a message. "At once!" said Glimson.

"What am I to say?" said Caland.

"Streathan will give you some names; or, better still," said Glimson, "speak only to Buerlin; say, 'Prepare at once without delay. Honour.' Reverse the sentence, then form a square of it, and repeat it letter for letter, beginning at the end. Do you understand?"

"Yes, that is the cypher. All right," said Caland, hurrying with his long strides to the telephone apparatus in the Alliance; and Glimson making for

Ingleton's abode with all speed possible. Antony had already disappeared.

Meanwhile, Blanche Collingwood was seated in James Ingleton's abode, he one side of the stove, and she and Nellie on the other, while little Georgie was playing with Katie, who was somewhat better, and was propped up with pillows on her couch. While the prattle of the children went on, the others continued their conversation, which concerned two notes on blue paper, with the national heading upon them, which were lying on the table near by.

"It is a strange fatuity," said Ingleton, "that these (pointing to the notes,) should have come this morning. I thought that a measure of triumph was mine, but it is dashed from my lips by these commands."

"We are compelled," said Blanche, pressing her lips together, "to go to work on Monday morning; I, who am no more fit to perform manual labour than a child. Oh! James, what shall we do."

Ingleton sat with brows knit, and answered, "I have sent for Mark Glimson. You will see that he will concur with me. Under the present circumstances it would be impossible to rise against the State, as all my plans are arranged for the bill for free speech, so you will have perforce to attend to the order. I see no way out of it."

"It's odious," said Nellie, stamping her little foot on the ground.

"It is disgraceful," said Blanche, with a pout.

"My dear," said Ingleton, "I never before felt my helplessness as I do at this moment. This is equality!"—the words came slowly and bitterly—"Equality with a vengeance. This is the dream of the ideal, to become a laundry maid. They shall have a just retribution, I swear it."

Katie ceased her prattle, and, through blind, turned her face towards Ingleton with a reproachful look.

Nellie caught the look, and said, "We must take things more calmly, it is foolish to be passionate over it."

"After all it will be only for a month or so," said Ingleton: "one month will either end or mend all."

"Oh! James, do nothing rash," said Blanche, terrified by Ingleton's determined tone.

"How true I spoke," continued Ingleton, not heeding the interruption, "when I said equality meant lowering, not raising. So this is the height of human aspiration, the result of ages of philosphy—the washtub. Why should I delay. Let the end come to-day, to-night, as well as a month hence."

"Blanche, still more moved by Ingleton's utterance, crossed to him, and gently pacified him, as only she could, and said, "Well, after all it will not last long, it will not permantly injure us."

Nellie, watching the effect of these words, chimed in, "I know what: we shall accept; and we shall take our place among the women, and then stir them as you have done the men."

"Well, James, we could do it," said Blanche, pleased with the suggestion. We could speak if we tried."

Ingleton, now somewhat calmer, saw the force of the argument, and said, "Yes, that would be giving a Roland for an Oliver. It is a very good suggestion. We shall hear what Glimson has to say when he comes in." They then remained silent for a time; while the children, now that Katie was more at her ease, continued their talk.

Georgie, who was watching her companion with something more than childish curiosity, said, "You cannot see."

"No," answered Katie with a sigh.

"You can't see my hands?" said Georgie, somewhat perplexed, putting her hands near Katie's eyes.

"No," answered Katie; "it is no use, however near you put your hands to me, I cannot see them."

This contention was more than Georgie could stand; so, first taking a deep look at those sightless orbs, she crossed to Blanche, and clinging to her in childish fondness, said, "How is it Katie cannot see me?"

Without venturing an answer, Blanche simply said, "Hush! be quiet."

At this moment the turning box opened, and a card announced Mark Glimson, who immediately after entered the room, glowing from his rapid exercise. Having greeted them, and asked after Katie's welfare, he sat down.

"I have just received your note," said he; "but please explain matters."

"This morning," said Ingleton, "this young lady, whom you are acquainted with, and my sister Nell, received orders from the labour bureau to join the laundresses on Monday."

Glimson surveyed the young ladies in question with some show of critical inspection, and with a merry twinkle in his eye, said, "Well, its beautiful! They are just made for that occupation."

"Oh! Mr. Glimson," said Nell, this is really serious, please don't jest."

"So far from jesting am I," said Glimson, "that I have already mobilized our forces; so you have but to resist—force against force—we must triumph."

"What!" exclaimed Ingleton, springing from his chair.

"Yes," continued Glimson, giving his arms a swing. "I was with Arthur Caland in the parade; Antony came breathless upon me; I read your note, and immediately told Caland to telephone to Buerlin to prepare for any emergency, or words to that effect."

"I have thought better of it," said Ingleton, re-seating himself. "I have taken all into consideration, and think it would be unwise to refuse to obey the commands."

Glimson went to the table and picked up the notes, and glanced curiously at them, and then said, as if reading from the notes, "Blanche Collingwood and Nellie Ingleton must join the laundresses on

Monday, November 3rd." Then looking up he said, "Has anyone else been summoned in this ward?"

"Yes," said Blanche, "my cousin Antony."

"What to do?" asked Glimson.

"A prison warder," answered Blanche.

"The walls will re-echo with the cry of Robin Hood," said Glimson.

"But Mr. Glimson," said Nell, "what do you advise us to do?"

"In theory," said Glimson, "it would be correct to oppose the State and provoke their anger, and take the consequences. It was on theory that I ordered the marshalling of our forces, which I shall immediately countermand; but in practice, and after mature consideration, I counsel you, with all reserve, to give obedience to the State, for I take it that you (he nodded at Ingleton,) think we might, or rather we must, try peaceful measures before resorting to force." With this he rose, and going to the telephone hidden behind the panelling of the wall, he opened the apparatus, and requested to be put in communication with Buerlin, which being done, he muttered a series of letters for that worthy's information and guidance, and closing the receiver and panel with care, he reseated himself.

"Yes," said Ingleton, "I have thought that it would be wrong to rise upon a simple provocation. I would rather wish to offer a proper alternative to the State."

"That we can do at an early sitting," interposed Glimson.

"Yes," continued Ingleton, "such weighty matters as the reformation or reorganization of a State should not be attempted as a mere outburst of insubordination, but rather as a result of an appeal to reason. I doubt not that any rising would materially result in a victory for Individualism. But I do not wish to be a demagogue, or appear as a mere agitator, who is willing for his personal ends to try and make capital of private wrongs. When private wrongs become general wrongs it is time to act."

"But," said Blanche, who had followed Ingleton's line of reasoning, "everybody suffers from the yoke of tyranny."

"Of course," said Nell; "here is James calling heaven and earth to witness the nation's wrong, and now he falters."

Both Ingleton and Glimson were surprised at the sharpness of this attack; and the former, speaking with deliberate care, said, "Listen, I and others count the cost; this is no child's play; this cleansing of the Augean stables will make homes desolate, wives widows, and children orphans"—the girls shrank at the words. "When the day dawns, blood will flow like water, and death will have a gourmand's feast. This cost we must reckon with; and would you have us attempt a task so weighty, so long as victory seems not positive?"

"I did not mean ill," said Nellie.

"You terrify me with your words, James," said Blanche, in a tone of alarm.

"I, myself," said Glimson, "have always been so impetuous, and never calculated the cost. Although second in command, I now accuse myself of rashness. How lightly we can blast a thousand lives when we are in earnest, terribly in earnest."

Antony now entered the room and walked to Katie, who fondly embraced him, and smoothed the wrinkles from his face.

Georgie now stood near the couch, and watched the various actors of this scene with the innocent look of childhood. At first her eyes followed Glimson, from him they travelled to Ingleton, then to Nellie, and when bent on Blanche they seemed to count the folds of her dress. Her eyes opened wider as she watched Katie with her hand on Antony's visage.

For a few moments there was silence: Georgie still regarding Katie in amazement, whilst the others were conning over Glimson's remarks, acknowledging the truth of his words, and thus finding a necessity to act with caution.

"I have proposed," said Nellie, turning to Glimson, "to go to work, and assist you by laying your proposals before my own sex."

"That indeed would be returning good for evil," replied Glimson. "You know I believe we owe this to someone's promptings, not so much to the State.

Private influence has done this," knitting his brows.

"Eh!" exclaimed Ingleton and his sister together, while Blanche turned white and bit her lips.

"Yes, I doubt not that I can find the person who has set this in motion," said Glimson, speaking very slowly.

"Whom are you thinking of?" said Ingleton.

"You must clearly understand that I only surmise," said Glimson, moving his head towards each in turn. "But I believe my suspicions would require but little confirmation. Let us see what Antony thinks, he has more instinct." The others, perplexed, agreed to the proposal, and Glimson said slowly, "Antony."

That worthy turned round and faced the others.

"Now, Antony," continued Glimson, dwelling on each word, "you have got to go to work on Monday?"

"Ye—es," answered Antony.

"Who has done it?" said Glimson, as slowly as before.

Antony looked askance at Blanche, and then at Ingleton, who motioned him to speak, when he said, "Pel—ham Stocking."

All except Glimson were taken aback at the sound of the name.

"It agrees with my thoughts," said Glimson.

"How comes that about?" said Ingleton. "I

looked upon Pelham Stocking as a friend, yet by all accounts he is a traitor."

"By mere accident," said Glimson. "Harry Bligow caught sight of Stocking coming from Mr. Slowun's room with a look of exultation upon his face that boded no good. He, (Bligow,) informed me of it this morning; and I thought there was something in the air, though I did not realise this."

Ingleton had during this recital become somewhat passionate, and said, "We must see to this at once, traitors are dangerous."

"It is absurd to talk of taking action; the whole is a matter of surmise; and we must let it rest till we can get absolute proof against him," said Glimson. "I am extremely sorry I spoke about it, because it will make you restless."

"No, no!" said Ingleton, "prevention is better than cure. We will take caution, but drop the matter for a while.

Blanche had recovered herself, and Antony was again playing with the child. Suddenly the sharp ring of the telephone bell was heard, and Ingleton, opening the panel, called out a series of letters which Glimson wrote down as they were received. The message ended, he closed the panel. Glimson compiled the letters with regard to the cypher, and at length read out, "Was prepared. Manchester won. Honour."

Ingleton and Glimson left the room and entered the adjoining one, their faces beaming with joy.

"At the end of every century, at the date marked with two noughts," said Ingleton, "signifying nothing, the vista of futurity seems to be eagerly watched for. At every epoch the end of the world was foretold, but the prediction has never been fulfilled. At such a period a restlessness has come over humanity. Reason, religion, government, politics, have in turn suffered from the periodical ebb and flow of the human mind. Now, with the dawn of another century, I think we will return to an old order of things."

Glimson had listened to this, and said, "It is already late; our election must be confirmed at four o'clock, so come on."

Immediately afterwards they departed.

CHAPTER XX.

"At half-past four on the 11th November of this year, a session of the Convention began. The weather had been murky, and towards that hour snow began to fall. From all parts of the country members came, arriving at a very early hour to secure a good seat. A huge crowd had collected at about nine o'clock in the morning, mostly composed of members of the Alliance; and despite the weather, they held their ground, and cheered such members as were best known." Thus writes Buerlin in the second chapter of his justly celebrated history.

At this date, Blanche Collingwood and Nellie Ingleton were already at the wash-house, with their hands steeped in soapsuds, to the disgust of Ingleton and Glimson, and the infinite delight of Pelham Stocking, and his mentor, Mr. Slowun, who had ably seconded his proposals for injuring Ingleton indirectly, when direct injury could not be done. At the same time, the delight was somewhat marred by the fact that no direct result had been achieved; for Stocking had judged that Ingleton would cause his sister and *fiancée* to refuse, and create a rising; and Stocking had so calculated upon this, that the Chief Constable had been forewarned to prepared for an arrest of the ringleaders. As the reader is already aware this

did not occur; and although at the moment he considered this spoilt sport, yet he was overjoyed to see Miss Collingwood and Nellie Ingleton return home exhausted from their labours, which included, unbeknown to him, the careful distribution of pamphlets which Ingleton and Glimson had written for the occasion. Bligow and the others had shown unwearied energy in continually bringing members to the cause, to the pleasure of Buerlin, who was everywhere to be found, and who was now ably assisted in the secretarial duties by Fitzwalter. A bill was already prepared, with the assistance of Buerlin, Ingleton, Glimson and Bligow, for power of free speech; and this was to be put on the list as early as possible to obtain a hearing. Thus, for a while, they rested upon their oars, depending upon this Bill to make the day, whether it was lost or carried. The industrial problem was at that moment more complicated than ever, for the ideal form had been reached, and weighed in the balance, and found wanting, to the dire perplexity of the Upper Chamber or Senate, which was at its wits' ends how to cope with the matter, and whose proposals were awaited with some anxiety that very evening.

The Anarchical solution, or the principle of "leave everything to take care of itself," was the original policy of industry upon which all systems and regulations had been built, running directly counter to the Socialistic ideals. The hierocratic solution could not with any show of reason be utilized,

however pleasing it might be to the priesthood who formulated it. The regulation of industry by government had been carried to extremes. In fact, the socialistic solution, the panacea for all industrial problems, was in possession of the field. In this utilitarian age, the natural test of all industries was its usefulness and necessity. Such trades as could not pass this standard were ruthlessly cast aside. At once rises the question, What was wanting? It was individuality. Collectivism created no wants, and allowed no competition and liberty of contracts. But, as is perfectly clear, to create freedom of action was to destroy Collectivism at one blow. This then was a point which could not have the slightest consideration, and yet the doctrine of unlimited State control came no nearer to provide a satisfactory solution than the proposals made by an Egyptian monarch to his workmen, when the earliest strike of which any record exists occurred. Thus industrial problems once more entered the field of politics to the bewilderment of those who had to solve them.

The Hall of Legislation was built in the Renaissance style, with handsome parterres and terraces. Inside, it was divided into two halls, one for the Convention, and the other, the smaller of the two, for the Senate (the senators being members for a term of seven years, and chosen from the last Convention prior to a re-election). The former, with which we will deal at present, had the seats arranged

in horse-shoe shape (one side for the Alliance and the other for the adults). At the centre at one end stood the president's chair, and the tribune from which the speeches were made. Below, there was a long table at which sat four clerks—the clerk of the President, the clerk of the House, the clerk of the Records, and he of the State. On a large frame were suspended a heap of green silk sashes, the insigniæ of office. At the time we write the 1st Corps of the London Defence Regiment kept guard in the corridors and at the entrances.

Around the hall ran a gallery for visitors, and behind the tribune, on a dais, were a double set of kinteographs, telephones, phonographs, and photophones, one set for the House, and the other for the *Half Hour*.

At 9.30 the Chamber was full, the 184 adults being seated with their sashes on, and the new members standing here and there in conversation. Suddenly a voice cried, "The President! the President! Make room," and that worthy, a black cloaked man of mature years, proceeded by two attendants, advanced slowly into the chamber, and made a bow in diverse directions. The clerk of the State then, with becoming dignity, handed him a green sash as member of the Chamber, and a blue one as President. Having put these on with the deliberation the occasion demanded, he walked on towards the chair, ascended it with deportment and grace, and engaged in conversation with his clerk for a few minutes.

Meanwhile the visitors rapidly filled the gallery. The new members, advancing from their places in obedience to a signal of the President's clerk, formed in line, approached the clerk's table, with Ingleton and Glimson at their head. Here the clerks were already busy with huge tomes.

Ingleton, having given his name, made the affirmation, "in the best interests of the country," as prescribed by the Clerk of the House, took a pen offered by the Clerk of Records, and signed his name, and was then invested with the insignia of office by the Clerk of State. This performance was repeated with wearisome monotony with all the new members.

At length the ceremony came to an end, and an usher announced, "The representative of the Senate." This person, dressed in a plush violet cloak and red sash, was accompanied by an official who carried the staff of State, marched majestically to the Tribune, ascended it, and produced a roll of ponderous length, and amid deepest silence addressed the assembly. Slowly he read through his document in a cracked and feeble voice to the amusement of Glimson, who was passing cynical remarks to those near him during the recital. When he had concluded, the assembly drew a sigh of relief as the representative descended the Tribune and majestically retired.

What proposals had been made! What next? had been the anxious question, and it remained

unanswered. The ponderous document contained nothing new; the usual tittle-tattle of the relationship abroad, the consideration of the impost, and expenditure for the year, and the promise—that was all, a bare promise—to introduce legislation for the better solution of the industrial problem at an early date. Disgust was visible on many faces, for hopes had been great that remedies would be introduced. But "the knowledge box is empty," remarked Heughin to Buerlin, in the gallery.

The usher then cried, "New Bills!" and Ingleton made for the table and presented a preamble of his bill, hurrying away again, delighted that he was the first on the list of Member's bills. In all, some twenty of these drafts were presented. After an hour spent in voting orders of the day for the better regulation of the business of the Convention, the assembly dispersed.

The last edition of the *Half Hour* contained a full account of the proceedings and the order of Members' bills, headed by Ingleton's. These, it was stated, would be dealt with in order of precedence as soon as supply had been voted, and standing orders considered. Amongst the curious parapraphs was this:—

"Their oracles are broken, their voices are dumb, their images are destroyed, and all is mute. Where is the voice of thunder? Where is the roar of the the lion, or the shriek of the eagle? Silent as the tomb. Return to your tents, for desolation is among you; for the signs are no more, and the voice is

unheeded. Come! chirping little sparrow, you were born late in the season, and your measure is run out, for the blast of winter has hastened your end. All is for a time, for a season, and a day."

"Well," said Pelham Stocking, in the office of Mr. Slowun; for, although it was late, he was still there; "what do you think of it?" handing him the newspaper from which he had read the paragraph.

"Very good, very good," whined Mr. Slowun; "you know it is artistic."

"Might not a strong leader against the bill have been more effective?" said Stocking.

"No! no! Rubbish! Strong leader! Nonsense!" answered Mr. Slowun, who was never strong in anything.

"After all, you are right," said Stocking; "an article might have called forth an answer. It is better to stab in the dark." Here was Stocking himself, the feeling betrayed him.

"My child, you know I always advise for the best," said Mr. Slowun.

"But how will we manage when the Bill comes on? it might pass the Convention by a fluke," said Stocking.

"What Bill?" asked Mr. Slowun.

"Oh, this one," said Stocking, pointing to the first Bill on the list.

"The first one," said Mr. Slowun, adjusting his glasses, which repeatedly fell off to the tune of several "Bother it's." Having, after some vain

attempts, adjusted them to his satisfaction; and beginning from the bottom of the list he at last found the one Stocking had indicated. He read the name, and simply ejaculated, "Rubbish."

"Oh, it is more than that," said Stocking.

"Nonsense! my child. What does he mean by free speech? That Ingleton is a fool. Nonsense! Rubbish!" said Mr. Slowun, dropping the paper and his glasses at the same time.

Stocking evidently agreed with the sentiment, but said, "Why, freedom of public debate and speech, I should say, whenever anyone willed."

"Oh! that is all nonsense," said Mr. Slowun. "Now don't you answer me," continued he, seeing that Stocking wished to speak. "I won't have it at all Nonsense."

With this he rose from his seat, gave his neck one of his peculiar cricks, and went through the usual performance with his hands. Then, going into a corner and turning suddenly round to see that Stocking did not watch him, he buried his head in his coat, which was extremely loose, and in a miserly gloating fashion put his hand in his breast pocket and produced two cigars therefrom. Thereupon he rapidly buttoned his coat, peering round at Stocking, who was intently watching the stove, then turned and went over to that worthy, saying, "Here, my child," and presented him with a cigar. This was received with an "Oh! thank you."

The cigars lighted, Mr. Slowun opened several

drawers with keys from a bunch, produced a dark brown liquid, some sugar, lemon and glasses, and with the assistance of Stocking and some hot water, brewed a liquid which, steaming hot, gave forth an aroma, the characteristics of which were not fit odour for the gods. This Mr. Slowun seemed to recognise, for he plentifully besprinkled himself with musty smelling scent, which did not add to the sweetness of the room. The whole of the foregoing performance was gone through without any unnecessary or undue haste.

These two congenial spirits then imbibed, and during the process, every now and again Mr. Slowun muttered "Bother it." Whether the grog was too hot, or too sweet, or the lemon bitter, or whatever gave rise to the murmurs, history does not relate. The grog consumed, a fresh supply was made, of which Stocking partook somewhat freely.

"Ingleton's Bill will come on soon," said Stocking.

"Bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun. "Yes, there will be a little business."

"That would be the occasion for a decisive stroke," said Stocking, refilling his glass.

"Yes, bother it. You know it is so much work, I can't find the time to do anything. I have got such a lot of work to do."

"Oh! I will write a strong article, or you could give such information as would cause the *Half Hour* people to do it themselves," said Stocking.

"Nonsense, nonsense," said Mr. Slowun, slightly

nodding his head, and causing his hat to fall off. This with a little difficulty he replaced.

"You do not know anything yet," said Stocking.

"Eh! Nonsense."

"But you do not," continued Stocking, "you have not read any of the pamphlets which have been distributed."

"Bad boy," said Mr. Slowun, "not to have told me."

"I thought it was quite unnecessary," said Stocking.

"You have no right to think, you should have told me at once. Now don't you answer me, for I will not have it," said Mr Slowun.

Although Stocking was used to this style of arguing, he did not vouchsafe an answer, but sat silently tracing in his mind the carving of the woodwork.

"You know I am not angry," said Mr. Slowun suddenly, as if the sentence were the immediate result of some inner cogitation.

"Nor am I," said Stocking.

"Then don't look like that," said Mr. Slowun.

"Like what?" queried Stocking.

"That," said Mr. Slowun, as he cricked his neck.

"My credit will be exhausted in a day or two," said Stocking.

"Well, get an advance on next year," said Mr. Slowun.

"I have had that long ago," said Stocking.

"You are a bad boy," said Mr. Slowun. "What do you do, to get rid of all your credit?"

"Don't ask foolish questions," said Stocking angrily.

"You are petulant," said Mr. Slowun." I meant no harm."

"I want a year's credit," said Stocking in a sulky tone."

"All right, my child, you shall have it; but you must wait a day or two," said Mr. Slowun, "you will get me into trouble."

"Bah!" said Stocking. "I dare say you have had six year's credit in one, if not more."

"Nonsense, nonsense," muttered Mr. Slowun.

"But it's true," said Stocking, "perhaps more."

"Supposing I have," said Mr. Slowun.

"Well, then a little more or a little less will make no difference to you. I must have it," said Stocking, laying emphases on the last sentence.

"I wont have it," said Mr. Slowun.

"Wont have what?" asked Stocking.

"You must not mention the matter again," said Mr. Slowun impatiently.

"Oh! all right. You get me a fresh allowance; I don't ask you how you get it, but get it for me," said Stocking.

"All right. Bother it, bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun for the next five minutes. At the end of another period of silence, Mr. Slowun reluctantly

proposed to go home, muttering some incoherent sentences, of which Stocking caught the words, "Nonsense. Bother it. Rubbish. I am tired. Too much work; will have to give it up." By this time he was carefully and well wrapped up; and accompanied by Stocking, who also took good care of his person, and carried his chief's inevitable black bag, the former wended his way home, in his usual slouch and turn-and-turn method. At his door, Stocking left him and hurried home without a pause.

Early on the morning of the thirteenth—that is, early for Mr. Slowun—viz., twelve o'clock, he was seated in his office talking to Mr. Garford, the Secretary of the Alliance, when Thompson entered and announced Mr. Hedgeco, Secretary of State.

Mr. Slowun, all of a flutter, rose from his seat, divested himself of his coat, and assisted by Thompson, robed himself in a better garment, which he brought forth from a cupboard, where this useful article was kept for state occasions.

Mr. Hedgeco, with a merry twinkle in his eye, entered the room directly afterwards, and bade "Good morning" to both Mr. Slowun and Mr. Garford.

Mr. Slowun, still flurried, muttered something between a "good morning" and "rubbish," then said, "To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit?"

"Rather important!" said Mr. Hedgeco, whose voice did not now ring with the stentorian tones in which we heard him speak through the telephone on

a memorable occasion. Thompson had left the room. Mr. Garford rose as if to go out, but Mr. Hedgeco asked him to remain, as he seated himself saying, "We want your assistance!" and then continued, turning towards Mr. Slowun, "James Ingleton is still a member of the Alliance?"

"Yes," said Mr. Slowun.

"Do the members, speaking broadly, follow his example?"

"I am sure I do not know," said Mr. Slowun; and then, as if to cover his answer, said, "I should say not."

"I am rather inclined to say they do," said Mr. Garford, in a slow methodical manner.

"Nonsense," said Mr. Slowun.

Mr. Hedgeco, who was regarding him critically, said, "How am I to take it?"

"You have heard my opinion," said Mr. Garford.

"Well, leave the answer as such," said Mr. Slowun, in a grumbling, dilatory way.

"Well, as President of the Alliance," said Mr. Hedgeco, laying stress upon the word President, "do you know, are the provincial members following the same policy?"

"It is impossible to say," said Mr. Slowun, nodding his head.

"And your reports go to show——?" asked Mr. Hedgeco of Mr. Garford, who replied,

"Very little. When, in obedience to your wishes, as you are aware, I requested to know the policy of

all candidates, the answers were as vague as usual. It was impossible to foreshadow the tactics that Ingleton would adopt, and therefore I could not ask if any intended to follow his course."

"No, that would have been undiplomatic," said Mr. Hedgeco. "The fact is, a general unrest is abroad in London, and we, meaning the Senate, fear the same for Great Britain. The demands for free speech might easily be granted, if we but knew to what lengths Ingleton and his friends—if he has any, and to my thinking he has them—intend to go."

"In my opinion the general body of the Alliance is with Ingleton and Glimson," said Mr. Garford.

"Ah, I forgot Glimson for the moment," said Mr. Hedgeco.

"You know they are a lot of fools," said Mr. Slowun pettishly.

"If they are," said Mr. Hedgeco, "there seems to be an amount of sense in their folly, not generally met with."

"If you assist them, or remain passive, when the bill for free speech comes on, they will undoubtedly take advantage of it," remarked Mr. Garford.

"I know that," said Mr. Hedgeco, "but if we resist it, will they not reap the same advantage?"

"Bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun.

Mr. Hedgeco continued, taking no notice of the interruption: "I must say, we are on the horns of a dilemma. We do not know with what power we have to cope. To fight in the dark is certainly not

my purpose. Is there no means of gauging the strength of Ingleton's party?"

"No," said Mr. Slowun decisively.

"I don't see my way clear," said Mr. Garford. "It is mere supposition; they may count thousands, though I do not see how they can; and they may be a mere handful."

"This is very unfortunate circumstances," said Mr. Hedgeco, rising. "You will greatly oblige me if you try to ascertain as much as possible about them, so that the Senate can regulate their action."

"We shall do our best," said Mr. Slowun, rising and following Mr. Hedgeco; and as that party left the room, Mr. Slowun muttered something in his ear which made him frown.

CHAPTER XXI.

Bligow, as jovial as ever, in spite of the burden of work which now fell to his share, found time to visit Willie Heughin daily, and assist in an enterprise which for a time was kept in strictest secrecy. Glimson, whose long arms were swung at twice their usual rate, was still hard at the history; and the excitement of the time, the meetings, the hurrying hither and thither, keeping a watchful eye on Pelham Stocking, writing pamphlets and letters for hours at a stretch, seemed but to lend fresh energy to him, where others would have been exhausted. Antony was at Katie's bedside in all his leisure time, for she had had a relapse; and he, in the greatness of his affection, would, if it had been possible, never have left her. Meanwhile Nellie and Blanche held steadily to their course, distributing or leaving pamphlets with assiduous care whereever they could, and with the result that a general strike in the laundries seemed imminent. As the days grew shorter the cause strengthened. Now there were murmurings in London, and the *Half Hour* would almost daily record a disturbance in various provincial towns. Arthur Caland would walk to his work with long and almost fierce strides, and sit defiantly at his desk to the imminent risk of his

personal freedom, for the overseer Burrows waited but for the occasion to provoke his anger. The trio—Burham, Perkins and Baxter, would greet the entry of this party into their room with a prolonged yet disdainful whistle.

Buerlin, who had drawn upon his next year's credit, was daily at work establishing fresh centres of discontent with quiet satisfaction, and nightly recording the day's events.

Pelham Stocking, running in continual fear of endangering himself to two sides at once, and being repudiated by either, spent his time rather unpleasantly, though a fresh credit allowance had been made to him, thanks to the offices of his mentor, who could not find time to do anything in particular while doing nothing. But Stocking, besides these daily embarrassments, had bad nights in the shape of troubled dreams, which were occasionally brought on by the repulses he met with at the hands of Blanche, at whose house he now never met Antony.

The Convention held daily meetings for the purpose of voting supplies and considering the imposts, upon which vexed questions both Ingleton and Glimson, who attended every meeting, remained discreetly silent. Thus dragged on a fortnight, during which Ingleton frequently visited Miss Collingwood, to the delight of Georgie and the benefit of Mrs. Berthon, who vented her ultra politeness on Ingleton, who gave little heed to her, while discussing the situation with Blanche. On the 22nd,

notice was given that the members' Bills would be taken in hand on the 25th. All were now agog with anxiety; and the secret meetings, while introducing nothing new, helped but the more to swell the discontent.

"Ah!" muttered Ingleton to himself on the morning of the 24th, "to-morrow will decide—decide what?" A moment later he had lapsed into a day dream, from which he roused himself with a strong effort; and putting on his outer garments, hurried to his aunt, who lived in Science Terrace. This lady was sitting in her private room, when Ingleton, previously announced through the turning box, entered.

After the usual greeting, a conversation ensued, of which Miss Smithers took the lion's share.

"You have advanced so far in the cause you call your own, that you must not—no, you cannot—retreat," said Miss Smithers.

"I had no such idea," answered Ingleton.

"Now is the time for action," said Miss Smithers. "James, you must cease dreaming, you must act."

"Such is my intention," said Ingleton.

"To-morrow your Bill comes before the Convention," said Miss Smithers.

"Yes," replied Ingleton.

"Every member of the House is in possession of a copy of its contents?"

"Yes, the House sees to that."

"So they all know what you ask for?"

"Yes."

"You have to move the Bill, and speak in its defence?"

"That is the order of procedure."

"Then it is seconded or spoken against, and finally the Bill will be discussed section by section."

"You are well acquainted with the method."

"Have you prepared your speech?"

"No," answered Ingleton in a decisive tone.

"Then what do you propose doing?" asked his aunt.

"Say that which comes uppermost in my mind," was the answer.

"Let the mind run riot! James, you are acting foolishly."

"I cannot prepare a speech."

"Your bill is a direct blow at the Constitution. You have a splendid subject; and if you speak at random, you will spoil it."

"No, no," said Ingleton, shaking his head.

"You do not think so; yet you know that all good speakers, in a similar position, prepare their speeches."

"No doubt. But if my tongue found utterance for my thoughts, I could speak for hours."

"But it would be full of wrongly turned sentences; it would be rambling; and you would jump from subject to subject."

"I know that."

"Such a speech may be effective at the moment, but it would not bear reading."

"I do not consider its readableness of such great importance as its effectiveness."

"I hope you will not allow your passions to master you."

"It is impossible to say what may occur."

"Do not utter anything treasonable, it will do you injury."

"You mean to say they will imprison me. I am prepared for that."

"James, I know you are cautious; but do be prudent, for terrible results may ensue."

"I have gauged the cost. I refuse to retreat whatever may occur."

"Far be it from me, who despise the Conventionalists; the inanity, the monotony, of this existence, to advise you so."

"Ingleton looked surprised at the words, and said, "Aunt, you never said so before."

"Why should I? What use would it have been?" answered Miss Smithers.

"Surely you did not think that universal suicide would be the wisest course for the nation."

"No, I did not; but from the first meeting of the Convention, which I distinctly remember, I felt that we would slowly lose our personality."

"I consider it my duty—I know not how, but so I consider it—to attract universal attention to the deplorable system under which we live."

"How many others consider the present system deplorable, as you term it?"

"I should say about fifteen thousand."

"As many as that?"

"Yes, perhaps a few more; perhaps thousands whom we have not sounded."

"How many members of the Convention are partizans?"

"Till last night, fifteen."

"That is not many."

"Quite sufficient for my needs."

"But you ought, say the Senate, to be satisfied with the present freedom."

"M' yes. Do you remember—

> "Whose freedom is suffrance and at will,
> Of a superior he is never free;
> Who lives, and is not weary of a life,
> Exposed to manacles, deserves them well?"

"Yes, but that refers to tyrants."

"Well, the Senate consists of tyrants, and therefore I can continue the verse—

> "The State that strives for liberty, though foil'd,
> And forced t' abandon what she bravely sought,
> Deserves at least applause for her attempt,
> And pity for her love. But that's a cause
> Not often unsuccessful."

"I never knew you could recite from memory."

"Not I; but I have read a deal, and sometimes the old world songs come home to me."

"But in the present day such thoughts are considered empty declamations."

"Who considers them such?"

"The Senate."

"The greater proof of the rights of liberty."

"We have wandered from our original conversation. Are any members of the Senate with you?"

"I have not troubled to see any except Mr. Bostwell, who will no doubt support us, though, being a conscientious man, he advised me to be cautious."

"How does Blanche view the matter?"

"She sympathises with me to that extent that she is materially assisting me."

For some time the conversation was kept on in the same manner; and when Ingleton rose to go, Miss Smithers said, "James, I will protect your sisters and mother if anything occurs. Be firm and prudent. Good morning."

On the evening of the same day, Ingleton saw Blanche, and they sat awhile in tender confidences, which were soon dispelled by Mrs. Berthon; and when Ingleton left that night, his mind was full of two conflicting emotions: his regard for Blanche, and if we may so put it, his disregard for her aunt, with whom he had nothing in common. For she, despite the acknowledged engagement of Ingleton and Blanche, was still, prompted by Pelham Stocking, working upon the girl's fear in that unworthy party's behalf.

* * * * *

When a man is possessed of one all-powerful and absorbing idea, he lives in the ideal. Sometimes he is a bore, sometimes otherwise. He who thinks much, speaks little, yet when the time for action and the affairs of the moment require it, his mute anxiety disappears, and the oppressing silence becomes a vapour, which dispelled, reveals the man—the inner man—exposed, to fall or stand by the actions of the day. What ensues it is difficult to say; acceptance might mean bewilderment, opposition might be suppression for ever.

This Ingleton knew, as he walked to the Hall of Legislation on the evening of the twenty-fifth, accompanied by Glimson. He observed a moody silence. None the less, however, the mind was speaking inwardly; unheard he said, "The silence of the nation shall disperse, the stillness of a quarter of a century now finds voice." Accepting the duty which fell upon him like fire from the firmament, he continued:—"The dumb shall speak, and the words re-echo over the world. He, one who is in his own design, willed that this should be; let none oppose him, for they are doomed."

This train of thought was stopped by their arrival at the Hall, where they were greeted by repeated "Hurrahs!" Glimson noticed that a large body of police was in evidence. When he entered he remarked to Ingleton, on looking round, "that the guard was increased." "It matters little," answered Ingleton, making for a seat.

A few moments later the Chamber was full, and the President arrived. The minor details were immediately gone through, and a look of anxiety became visible on all faces. Ingleton now for the first time noticed that the gallery was crowded.

The Clerk of the House, without rising, said, "The Members' Bills will be dealt with in their order of procedure."

The Clerk of Records, in the same manner said, "A Bill for the right and liberty of speech takes precedence."

"Let it be so," said the President.

The Clerk of State, rising and bowing to the President, read the bill through, which all present followed from the copies they held in their hands; and when he had concluded the reading, said, "The members of the Convention are required in due time to record their votes."

Glimson, rising in his seat, said, "Is this within the limits of the ordinary rules of the Chamber?"

"Yes," answered the Clerk of the State.

James Ingleton then deliberately ascended the tribune, and taking a copy of the Bill from his pocket, laid it by his side; and then standing erect, said,—

"Mr. President and Members of the Convention, —There is now before you a Bill which I have had the honour of formulating; for it I ask your earnest consideration. I entreat you not to oppose it hastily. What do I ask for? The freedom of speech under

a better condition of things. We should have possessed it long ago." (Cries of order.)

Glimson, who was noting carefully every word, muttered, "A point."

Ingleton continued: "For twenty years, or thereabouts, have we been dumb. Why? Because we have elected to be fools, to be puppets, to be played with by the Senate."

"Order! order!" came from many voices; and someone shouted, "Question."

Glimson smiled; and Buerlin and Bligow, in the gallery, enjoyed the momentary confusion.

The President said, "Mr. Ingleton will keep to the question."

"I do," answered Ingleton; and continuing said, "I demand, in the name of thousands, in the name of the whole commonwealth, that liberty of speech be granted. This, the sacred right of Englishmen, we were deprived of by those ignoramuses, the Levellers, at the commencement of the Social State."

"Order! order!" came from the further end of the Chamber.

"Some time ago I chose to deliver a lecture on a subject which I thought of interest to my fellows. Originally it was intended to be a debate. What occurred? I was summoned before a Senator, and had to abandon my idea. Was this not odious? On the night of the lecture I was suddenly ordered to stop by the Secretary of State. I did so. Those present thought it right to obey. Is this right; is

this just; should this occur again? No! a thousand times no! The voice of the nation re-echoes my voice, and it must be obeyed." ("Order! order!" was again shouted.) "He who shouts means I should be silent. I demand to be heard, and you shall hear me. If to-morrow I or anyone else wishes to speak, he should be allowed to do so—he has a right to do so. If you can control a man's thoughts as you do his actions—(order)—then you may limit his speech. I think; therefore, I wish to speak, and I will not recognize any limit to my words. No one has a right to deny me this privilege."

Those in opposition to the Bill suddenly rose and gave a thundering cry of "Order." Those in the gallery, also fired with speech, shouted according to their ideas. The cry of order was answered by those of "Go-on! go-on!" The President rose as if to leave his chair, and suspend the sitting.

This produced silence for a moment; and Phillip Hardson, senior member for Newcastle, shouted, "Let the boy chatter, we need not notice him."

Ingleton, who was silent during the commotion, began speaking at the insult; and Glimson ran up to the tribune; but the intervention of the President once more restored order, and Hardson received a caution. Glimson returned to his seat, and Ingleton continued:

"There are those who would gag me, those who wish to bring discredit upon me, and those who think with me. To those I say, they must hear me, they

shall hear me. If the Social State is opposed to liberty, then the Social State must be proscribed."

"James is getting warm," muttered Glimson as the shout of "Question!" again resounded.

"I say," continued Ingleton, "I repeat, that if I am out of order, the State is in the wrong, not I. That with which the fault lies, let it be corrected. They who wish to defend the State can do so in their turn" (Question.) "Speaking for liberty of speech, you deny me the right even now. Why, after a century of this liberty, did you take it away, you who represent the State? Why! because you knew the rottenness of your structure, and were afraid of comments."

Once more arose the cries of "order" and "go on." At last, however, silence again being restored, the Clerk of State rose and said, "Mr. Ingleton, you are speaking treason."

"I am speaking truth," answered Ingleton.

"It is treason," said the Clerk, "and as such it is amenable to law."

"What do you define as treason?" asked Ingleton.

"Speaking as you are against law and order," said the Clerk, sitting down.

Ingleton continued: "My Bill is but just in time, speech is treasonable, so says the Clerk of State, expecting my obedience. Criticism is dangerous; then how weak is the State that is afraid of it. The commonweal is afraid of the feeble utterances of one individual" ("Bravo, they are feeble," shouted Hard-

son), "yet feeble though they be, you like them not. This ideal State as you call it, is monstrous, it is infamous, it is odious."

His voice was once more drowned by the cries. Glimson, who could not bear to take a passive part amid this excitement, ascended the tribune and shouted above the din,—

"Let Ingleton go on, answer him afterwards. Shame on you for a lot of cowards. You do not like truths, but you shall hear them though they strike home."

After an interval of hisses, silence was restored, and Glimson was ordered from the tribune.

"Have a care," continued Ingleton. "At this moment I stand higher than you, and in reality I am above you. This is not boastful. I demand liberty of speech and, and as you rightly fear, liberty of action. Thought—that is conscience—creates speech, which causes action. I demand these—I, the mouthpiece of that individuality, which is so nauseous to you. I, as the voice, ask for their individuality and freedom; and you, if you wish to preserve yourselves, must give it. You are in unlimited power as judge and accuser; you are at the summit, and in your power you would forget others. You forget the potency of individualism, but you will have to reckon with it. Experience, the bitter teacher, taught me and educated me. I look upon your divinities—law and order, as grimalkins disguised. Your justice presents a potent drink, which retards progress

instead of hastening it. Did I expect to say this? No. Did you expect to hear this? No. Then why am I here? It is ordained. Then listed to the inevitable. Supress me if you like, yet you cannot supress individuality" (Question was again called.) "You cry question. I question whether you have fulfilled your duty. Have you allowed reason to flow? No! for you are unreason itself. You would retard us, but you shall not. I speak treason, speaking truth. Therein lies a fault. Who is in fault—truth or the State?" (Question. Question.) "You are right with your question, I should come to the point. I have come to the point. I have my head in the lion's mouth. I must begin where the question is greatest. So many are the wrongs that we have to bear with that I know not where to begin."

Lawrence Campbell, senior member for Birmingham, here rose and shouted, "Mr. President, adjourn the sitting."

A host of others shouted, "Enough, enough!" and the voices of the young Alliance members sounded like a roar—"Go on."

"Yes, go on," shouted Hardson. "He is amusing, this is better than a comedy."

The President, having obtained a little silence, said, "Mr. Ingleton, you are speaking treason, you must cease that. If you will keep to your question you can go on." Then he seated himself and hurriedly scribbled a note which he handed to his Clerk, who in turn showed it to the Clerks of State,

Record, and the House, and then handed it to an usher, who left the Chamber with it.

Glimson noted this, rose from his seat, hurriedly left the Chamber and ascended the visitors' gallery, where he had an interview with Bligow and Buerlin.

Meanwhile Ingleton resumed, "This is a comedy you say, I fear with a tragic ending. The country is dissatisfied, the industrial problems are more entangled than ever. This you term insubordination; this I call Individualism crying for its rights. The whole constitution requires reforming. We require a new constitution, a new organization. Down with the constitution and all its hateful environments."

In the excitement of the moment he had uttered these words, and seeing he had gone thus far, he knew it was too late to withdraw even if he had wished to.

The ominous ring of the President's bell was heard. Again Ingleton spoke, "I demand that this Convention be dissolved." ("Hear, hear," shouted the members of the young Alliance, while the seniors were deadly white from the bold words.) "I demand that a new Government be organized under which humanity may be elevated instead of degraded."

"Down with the Convention. Down with the Senate," came from a hundred throats. Then six men and a sergeant of the guard on duty were seen advancing into the room.

Ingleton, with his arms folded, watched them approach.

Glimson ran for the tribune and ascended, and shouted, but his voice was drowned in the tumult.

Ingleton was buried in thought. Did he expect this? Yes, and no. He was prepared for this emergency, yet did not expect it.

The Clerk of State, rising, said, "Mr. Ingleton, I hold a warrant for your arrest; you have spoken treason."

A sound as of a wounded animal came from those in the gallery.

Glimson shouted, "Down with the State," and the cry was quickly re-echoed by those seated above.

The police advanced towards the tribune, and an altercation took place between the sergeant, Ingleton, and Glimson.

"You are under arrest," said the sergeant to Ingleton.

"Mind your own business," said Glimson.

"Do not be obdurate," said the sergeant.

Ingleton turned as if to descend. Glimson held him back, and said to the sergeant, "Go home."

"I shall pull you down," said the sergeant.

"Try it," answered Glimson.

"Well, it is useless to resist," said Ingleton.

"We want a little time," whispered Glimson to Ingleton; "let the news spread."

"I shall not remain here all day," said the sergeant.

Perkins, who was in the gallery holding on to the railing, jumped over it, slid down the pillar, and strode up to the tribune. Such was the tumult that this was not noticed.

"Pull him down," said the sergeant, turning to his men. They advanced to the steps.

Perkins, without stopping, sprang on to the Presidential chair (to the horror of its occupant), and clinging to it with his long arms he vaulted on to the tribune. Still the tumult grew.

Two soldiers ascended the tribune. Glimson struck the foremost soldier on the chest, and knocked him down. Meanwhile, in the sacred precincts of the Chamber, blows were dealt on many sides.

The second soldier, seeing the fate of his comrade, wished to retreat; but Perkins, reaching his long arms to good purpose, caught him by the throat, and lifting him up from the ground, threw him bodily on to the table where the clerks sat, knocking the Clerk of State out of his chair.

The President rose from his seat and made a vain attempt to dissolve the sitting, for no one could hear him. His progress was cut short by the third soldier—of the stout, bully type—falling on him. Glimson and Perkins had caught him and thrown him across the Chamber, and he fell on the President, and the two lay pros-

trate on the ground. The sergeant, perplexed, ascended the tribune with his remaining three men. He found himself a moment later in the President's chair.

Suddenly the tumult increased, and cries were heard coming from the street.

The three soldiers were pushed from the tribune. Then Glimson and Perkins, catching hold of Ingleton, ran down the stairs, walked over the soldiers, and pressed through the tumult, kicking and cuffing everyone who prevented their passage. But all this was of little avail, the throng was too great. Hardson, of Newcastle, suddenly caught hold of Ingleton behind, who turned round, released himself from his friends, and felled Hardson.

The cries grew louder and louder; and through the now broken windows came the sound of "Hurrah for Ingleton and liberty."

In this manner they made for the door, when Ingleton whispered to Perkins—"Go."

Perkins, shaking hands, made his way to the centre of the hall, and jumping on the seats clambered up a support of the gallery, then on to it, and for a moment viewing the scene from the deserted gallery, he took himself off.

At the door a large force was in waiting; and Glimson, seeing the folly of further resistance, allowed Ingleton to give himself over to an officer.

"Stick to the cause, and give my farewell to my friends," said Ingleton, shaking hands; but Glimson's

progress was prevented by the officer, showing him a warrant for his arrest.

"Good," said Glimson, "this won't last long."

Then, between defiles of troops, Glimson and Ingleton were removed from the scene, arrested on a charge of treason.

CHAPTER XXII.

BETWEEN the defiles, Ingleton and Glimson descended the steps of the Hall of Legislation, and were led through the most unfrequented passages into the street at the back of the building; but even here a number of people were collected, who immediately fell back on the appearance of the squad of troops.

Here the procession was augmented by another company of soldiers; and so they made their way through streets lined by the populace. As they walked along, Ingleton looked up but once, and that was in order to notice the contents of the *Half Hour* placard, which, at three o'clock that afternoon, had an article condemning the Individualists and the pamphlets, pointing the finger of scorn at them. Now the contents bills exhibited the words, "Arrest of Ingleton and Glimson on a charge of treason. Scenes in the Chamber." As he noted these words he drew Glimson's attention to them, and whispered to him, "This has been cut and dried for us."

"I am aware of that," answered Glimson; and then they lapsed into a moody silence.

At last the steady tramp of the soldiers ceased. They were before the State prison, the doors of which swung open.

The troops formed into two files; and with two men leading, and two behind, they entered the prison with a firm step, without even once looking at the starlit sky which, perhaps, they might never behold again.

Inside they were met by a warder and an officer, who again read the charge over to them, and then said, "Have you anything to remark?"

"If truth is treason, then I have spoken treasonably," answered Ingleton.

"You know your business," said Glimson to the officer.

They were then conducted to an apartment (for, as prisoners of State, they could not be placed in cells,) by a warder who kindly informed them "That there was something nice in store for them," and then went out, locked the door, and removed a piece of panelling, so that he could if he thought necessary observe them.

The room was furnished with chairs and a table, a writing desk and other necessaries. In a corner stood two low truckle beds. Light came from an incandescent lamp.

Glimson surveyed the room in a slow deliberate manner, and turning to Ingleton said, "This has been arranged for hours."

Ingleton, who was seated, answered, "I suppose so."

Glimson continued the survey; and catching sight of the opening in the panelling of the door, walked

up to it, closely examined it, and turning to Ingleton said, "See this."

Ingleton rose from his seat, noted the aperture and said, "We are under observation."

"Can we close the aperture?" said Glimson.

"It would be useless," answered Ingleton.

"Well, the best thing will be to get clear from observation. Let us remove our chairs out of the range of vision," said Glimson. In a moment this was done.

Ingleton pressed a bell. A moment later the warder appeared. To him Ingleton said, "Here is a writing desk; I require pen, ink, and paper." The warder was about to retire. Ingleton recalled him, and taking his sash off (it was a little torn), said, "Here, give this to the governor." The warder accepted it. "Now I am no longer a member of the Convention; I am a private individual."

Glimson, who had watched the proceeding, did likewise, telling the warder to "be off."

That worthy left the room, closing it with a slam that woke the echoes in the corridors.

A few minutes later the warder returned with the writing material and sashes, and laying the latter on the table said, "The governor refuses them," and left the room.

"I see! we are to be tried as members of the Convention," said Glimson in a low voice.

"Yes," answered Ingleton. "I sent my sash with a motive."

"I knew that," said Glimson.

"It is evident we shall not be left together for longer than to-night, let us try and complete our work if possible. Our removal will not ruin the cause," said Ingleton, turning to the writing table.

"You are right," said Glimson. "I prepared for this, but what is the use of writing? How can we convey it?"

"If we cannot send this off, eventually we must destroy it, though we shall find ways and means."

"Is communication with our friends cut off?" said Glimson.

"What I intend to write would never leave this place if the authorities knew it," answered Ingleton with a smile.

"What are you going to do?" asked Glimson, rising from his seat and going over to Ingleton.

"Help me to formulate the nucleus of a new constitution, and directions for the guidance of our friends," said Ingleton.

Glimson then crossed the room and peered through the aperture in the door. "It is all right," said he, going back to the desk.

Ingleton took several sheets from the heap and gave them to Glimson.

"They are headed," said that worthy, referring to the address heading on the paper.

Ingleton took a sheet and began writing, but feeling something between the paper, opened it, and found a small piece of paper on which was written in

Roman Characters, "There are friends here, Honour." He was surprised at this declaration, and handed it to Glimson, who, reading, shouted, "Bravo!"

"Shut up," said Ingleton, "and get to work." He tore the paper into pieces and hid them between the mattress of the bed. "This will do till the morning. They must be destroyed," said he; and he sat to work.

* * * * *

To return to the Hall of Legislation. From the moment Ingleton and Glimson had been taken prisoners the tumult began to subside. The police, having no instructions, or being afraid to act upon them, allowed every one to depart; and this was affected in such haste that the members walked home with their sashes on, to the amusement of the small boy, who is everywhere.

Buerlin and Bligow, who had left the Hall of Legislation soon after their interview with Glimson, repaired to that worthy's house, and found on a table in his room some placards, which he had prepared. These they took away with them, and pinned to the nearest contents bill of the *Half Hour*. The wording which was short, was very much to the point. Glimson had foreseen the result of the day's action and had prepared for it. A meeting was to be held in the Hall of the Alliance Club. This bill posting done, Bligow hurried to the Alliance, while Buerlin made for the telephone office and immedi-

ately gave information to his friends in different towns, as to the course the day had taken. Then he returned to the Alliance, where Bligow and Fitzwalter were in waiting. In a short space of time a crowd collected; and without any parley the door was forced and admission gained to the Hall. Arthur Caland, who was among the crowd, sprang upon the platform, and so did Bligow and Buerlin. Fitzwalter was already there, and taking a wrench from his pocket, quickly put the aural instruments out of working order. A guard was then arranged, that they might not be surprised; and Caland delivered an impetuous speech, every word breathing enmity to the State; and it was received by the mixed audience with many cheers.

Buerlin, in the name of the leaders of the movement, then addressed those present. He made a statement guiding their future conduct, and told them how he had acted.

Bligow succeeded him. The first words he spoke were, "We must not stop here long;" and then he told them what Glimson's last words were that day: "Individuality to the fore." Did they agree to this? A deafening shout of "Yes" was the answer.

Caland whispered to Perkins, "If *they* were only here."

"Then we should not be here," answered he; and then recounted his share in the final scene in the Chamber.

Bligow spoke for a few minutes longer, admonish-

ing them to be cautious for the sake of those in prison.

George Cavendish, till now unobserved, proposed Bligow as provisional leader. The enviable, but decidedly dangerous position, was accorded him without demur, and he accepted it.

Caland undertook to assist him. Every now and then was heard a shout, "Down with the State." Buerlin rubbed his hands.

Fitzwalter was the next to address the people. He spoke in a quiet and moderate tone. This did not suit the excited audience, so he soon gave over.

Caland once more addressed them, and every sentence was interrupted with, "Individualism to the fore!"

"The cause gains," whispered Baxter to Burham, who was in attendance as become a member of the trio.

"Forget not the leaders," answered Burham.

Bligow, who closed the meeting, promised to take immediate action. They could find his instructions in the pamphlets and placards signed "Honour." Would they obey him?

"Yes," came the shout, "yes!" They would perhaps find them dangerous to themselves: they might cause them to come into contact with the Government. Did they fear? "No, no."

"They are willing," muttered Cavendish to Hollis.

"Prepared," was the rejoinder.

"Three cheers for Ingleton and Glimson," cried Bligow; and they were responded to in lusty English fashion. Then the meeting dispersed.

Where was Pelham Stocking—where? We find him in Mr. Slowun's abode. The latter, contrary to his usual rule, but in accordance with the advice of Stocking, had gone home early. Stocking accompanied him, and was now seated by his side.

"That article has upset him," said he.

"Yes," answered Mr. Slowun, who was shaking from fear as though he had the ague.

"Ingleton and Glimson are settled for ever by this time," said Stocking. It was 7.30.

"I hope nothing will occur," said Mr. Slowun in trembling toner.

"Something will occur; something has occurred," said Stocking.

"Oh! oh! Bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun.

"You are afraid," said Stocking, in a contemptuous tone.

"Nonsense," answered Mr. Slowun; but he clutched at his chair for support.

"You are," said Stocking. "I will get you something to drink." He rose and pressed a button. The summons was answered, and soon afterwards the necessaries for a glass of grog were brought. Stocking mixed the liquor, poured out two glasses, and handed one to Mr. Slowun, who spilled some of his liquor in his trembling.

"A toast," said Stocking, glancing at the liquid

with the eye of a connoisseur. Mr. Slowun acquiesced.

"Then, here's to Ingleton's death feast," said Stocking, with a triumphant smile on his face.

"Yes. Bother it," muttered Mr. Slowun; and he imbibed. For some time they remained silent—till the *Half Hour* was brought in. Stocking snatched it up and read it with avidity, and then said to his mentor, "Ingleton and Glimson have been arrested."

Mr. Slowun dropped his glass, and it broke to atoms. Stocking then read aloud the scene in the Chamber; and every sentence caused Mr. Slowun to cringe more and more in his chair. Stocking watched him with a sneer; and obtaining a fresh glass, plied him with more grog.

"Who is cleverer," said Stocking, "I or *they*?" The sneer was even more pronounced.

"You are a good boy," was the answer.

"Ingleton, you have played a losing game," muttered Stocking to himself; adding, "Blanche Collingwood, I triumph." He enjoyed his own voice, and laughed. There was a world in that laugh.

Mr. Slowun did not catch those words, and exclaimed, "Eh?"

"Nothing," answered Stocking.

"Nonsense," muttered Mr. Slowun, from habit.

"They will be tried in a day or two," said Stocking.

"I shall know to-morrow morning," answered Mr. Slowun.

"The evidence will be conclusive. They would have been arrested under any circumstances, thanks to your assistance," said Stocking.

"Yes. I hope I will not have to appear."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not want to," answered Mr. Slowun, trembling at the idea.

"There is little fear of that."

They relapsed into silence, during which each held communion with himself. Did conscience accuse them of evil? Did their mind awaken to the sense of right or wrong? The sneer on Stocking's features was a negative sign; the trembling of Mr. Slowun answered "Yes."

Once more let us patrol the streets of London. The moon shone brightly, and the stars shimmered overhead. Sometimes the night speaks; sometimes the atmosphere, being in accord with our feelings, finds a voice, but not to-night. We find ourselves in Liberation Square. Little spars of ice are forming in the basin of the fountain; the phonochronometer—its voice resounding in the cold—bawls half-past eight.

Blanche Collingwood was seated in the room in which we have met her before. On the floor lay the last edition of the newspaper. Her eyes were red and her cheeks pale. Evidently she had been crying.

Her aunt entered the room, and seated herself.

"You have been crying," she said.

Blanche picked up the paper and handed it to her aunt. This was her answer.

Mrs. Berthon smoothed the crumbled paper in a dignified manner. She had not heard the news, but had an inkling of the truth. She was anxious to read it, but did not. Above all she wished to be self-possessed and calm on all occasions. She prided herself on her dignity. To be eager, was to show ill-breeding. With that calmness, which comes from restraint upon the feelings, she read the news; stopping every now and then, as if in thought.

"So you have been crying about this," said she, laying the newspaper on a table.

"Yes," answered Blanche, blushing.

Her aunt brought her two eyes to bear upon Blanche as if to search her mind. "I am surprised at you, crying over a lover," she said in icy tones.

"Why?"

"Because it is undignified," she answered with hauteur, with a toss of her head.

"I do not understand you," said Blanche.

"Nor I you," said Mrs. Berthon, with a reproachful look.

Blanche put her hands to her head; the tears trickled unheeded down her face. Mrs. Berthon held her peace till Blanche recovered herself; then she said, "Wipe those tears away." Blanche did so with a sigh.

Her aunt continued, "James Ingleton is in prison. This I foresaw. You are crying for him; you have

allied yourself to a revolutionist; and estranged yourself from one who meant well. Pelham Stocking would not have caused those tears."

"This is beside the question," rejoined Blanche. "I must see Nellie and her mother."

"You are unmaidenly," said her aunt.

"What would you have me do?" asked Blanche.

"Nothing," was the answer.

"What! when others are in danger."

"That is their concern."

"And mine."

"You are wrong; your first duty is to take my advice; besides, you can do nothing."

"I must! I will!" exclaimed Blanche.

"This is ridiculous. You are making a scene. In calmer moments you will see the folly of this."

"I shall not regret it."

"We shall see." The words were uttered decisively.

"Oh! what will they do with him?"

"I do not know, but I suppose execute them both." The words were spoken in calm, smooth tones, with not a ruffle on Mrs. Berthon's featuers.

Blanche again began crying, but, checking herself, she wiped the tears away and rose from her chair.

"Where are you going to?" asked Mrs. Berthon.

"To Mrs. Ingleton," answered Blanche.

"I shall not go with you," said her aunt.

"I intend to go, and that now. If you will not accompany me I'll go by myself," said Blanche.

"You are responsible for your own actions," said her aunt.

"I accept the responsibility," said Blanche, leaving the room. She returned dressed for going out.

"You are the most unreasonable being I ever came across," said Mrs. Berthon, without deigning to look at her niece.

Blanche, without vouchsafing an answer, left the room; and a moment later the street door inform Mrs. Berthon that Blanche had been as good as her word. Henceforth they were estranged.

When Blanche arrived at the abode of the Ingleton family, she was received with unusual warmth by Nellie, who, despite the rubbing she had given her eyes, told the tale of her womanly weakness.

Mrs. Ingleton sat nursing herself, if the term may be used, in her chair, muttering, "I said so, I said so."

The entrance of Blanche recalled her motherly instinct, for she greeted her with, "My poor Blanche," and then, "I said so."

"You said so," said Nell, seating herself. Blanche did likewise. "True enough, but this will not help James."

"My mother always told me," said Mrs. Ingleton, "how these matters ended. Oh, my poor James!" She rocked herself in her chair, and the three women could not repress their tears.

Blanche was the first to recover herself. "What is to be done?" she said.

"I don't know," answered Mrs. Ingleton, still rocking herself. Evidently the shock had momentarily bewildered her.

"Something must be done," said Nell.

"Something *shall* be done," said Blanche.

"Oh, my poor children! whatever shall I do. Oh, James, James, this is too hard. My mother always told me the fate of revolutionists," sobbed Mrs. Ingleton, sobbing and rocking herself continuously.

"Have any of James's friends been here?" asked Blanche of Nell.

"No," answered she. "But I had a note from Harry Bligow promising he would come to-night."

"I wish he were here," said Blanche.

"No use, no use," sobbed Mrs. Ingleton; "no use. Oh, my poor James."

"Mother, do not take it to heart so much," said Nell, "it will come all right in the end."

"Yes, so it will," said Blanche; but her tone and her features spoke otherwise.

Mrs. Ingleton took no heed of them, but continued rocking herself.

"Does Katie know it?" queried Blanche.

"No, I dare not tell her," said Nell.

"Oh, what can we do?" said Blanche, clasping her hands in agony, not knowing how to act.

Nell sat pondering, her eyes cast on the ground. Her tongue refused an answer. What could they do?

The question seemed the bitterness of despair. They racked their brains; and their hearts were full. What agony to be helpless.

"Will Bligow never come?" asked Nellie; but silence was the only answer.

The only sound was the mumbling of Mrs. Ingleton.

Hours passed in this fashion, when the sound of a bell brought hope to their hearts. Here then was Bligow. They were not mistaken, for a moment later he entered—his face, usually jovial, now flushed with excitement; but as he looked at Mrs Ingleton his features constrained to a look of sympathy. He had but little consolation to offer.

"Well, what news have you?" asked Blanche. She knew him better by repute than person.

"Very little," answered he.

Mrs. Ingleton looked up for a moment at Bligow and murmured, "No use, no use."

"We are in despair," said Nell; "what shall we do?"

Have a little patience," said Bligow, "and all will be right. We have had a meeting this evening, and our friends are with us. This made me so late. To-night we have a consultation—I mean the leaders—and then we shall decide what to do. I intend to petition the Senate, backed by ten thousand signatures of those who will respond to my call."

"What will the Senate do?" asked Nell.

"Your brother and Glimson will be tried for

treason and——" He stopped; how could he say the words.

Nell bowed her head—she understood.

Blanche covered her face in despair.

"But it will never come to that," said Bligow in heavy accents—there was something in his throat—"I pledge my life to you that they shall be rescued."

These words slightly reassured the girls.

Bligow continued, "Two days must elapse before the trial, at least, though the Government will take action as soon as possible. Two days are sufficient for me to work out my designs."

"Antony is a warder," said Blanche, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"I shall find means to communicate with James to-morrow," said Bligow.

"May we not see him?" said Blanche."

"Yes," answered Bligow, "but in the presence of a warder. I wish to act independently of them, unless I can get Antony's assistance. You can see him to-morrow; go if you wish; but for God's sake say nothing compromising."

"How will you be able to communicate with James?" asked Nell.

"My plan is hardly formed, but I will find means. I promise you I will," said Bligow, "have no fears yet."

Nell went to her mother, and touching her on her arm, said, "Mother, you can see James to-morrow."

"Eh!" exclaimed Mrs. Ingleton. "Here?"

"No," answered Bligow, in a voice of sorrow, "in the prison."

"No use, no use," murmured Mrs. Ingleton, again rocking herself.

"What say your friends?" asked Blanche.

"They fall or stand by James," was Bligow's answer.

"When will you let us know?" asked Nell.

"To-morrow; what time I cannot say, but you shall hear from me," answered Bligow.

Meanwhile we must wait patiently," said Blanche, now more resigned to the situation.

"I must go; I have a night's work before me," said Bligow. "I shall be pleased to escort you home, Miss Collingwood."

Blanche accepted the offer; and having greeted Nell, again tried to soothe Mrs. Ingleton, but in vain; then she departed, escorted by Bligow.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE streets are still deserted, except for the occasional tramp, tramp, of cooks and scullions hurrying to their work at the food kitchens. It is but six o'clock, and a ghostly darkness ushers the coming day.

Out of Bligow's abode walked six persons; they are himself, accompanied by Caland, Fitzwalter, Cavendish, Perkins, and Buerlin. Their eyes are heavy, and they have the general appearance of men who have been up and doing during the night, instead of lying in bed dreaming the hours away.

"It is cold," said Fitzwalter, turning up the collar of his ulster.

"Yes, but we will get warm before the day is over," said Caland, looking at the waning night.

"Come! each to his work," said Bligow. "Have you got your pamphlets, Cavendish?"

"Yes," answered he, tapping his breast.

"You, the placards?" turning to Perkins.

"Yes." The bulging aspect of his chest was sufficient.

"Nine o'clock sharp, at the Alliance," said Bligow, and away he went. The others hurried to their respective destinations.

Bligow went in the direction of the prison, and

walked along the high wall of that sombre looking building till he came to a common dining establishment, named "The State." Here he stopped and gave a prolonged whistle. In a moment or two an answer was given; and a man, dressed as a cook, emerged from the dining hall and looked about him. Bligow approached him and said, "Honour!"

The man answered, "Bright!"

"The breakfasts for all prisoners are prepared here?" asked Bligow.

"Yes."

"Have they been ordered already?" asked Bligow, in a very low tone.

"No, not before seven o'clock," said the man.

"Are they prepared separately?"

"Only for first-class cases."

"Do you receive names, or numbers?"

"In untried cases we have the names with orders, as they are allowed to have whatever they wish."

Bligow speaking still more softly, and drawing the man towards him said, "Can you manage to get a few slips of paper in the food of Ingleton and Glimson?"

"To be free from observation, of course?"

"Decidedly!"

"I will manage it."

"Upon your word?"

"Honour!" was the answer.

"Good! here they are," said Bligow, handing the man four slips one-eight of an inch wide, covered

with microscopic characters. He rolled the little notes tightly between his thumb and forefinger.

The man took the little rolls, and said, "Do you expect an answer?"

"No," answered Bligow.

"Time is up, I must go," said the man; and he went into the building. Bligow walked away.

Ingleton and Glimson rose with the first ring of the prison bell, and hurriedly performed their ablutions. When finished, Glimson having first seen that the manuscript, the result of their evening's work, was safe, summoned a warder, and said to him, "Can we order what we like for breakfast?"

"Yes, on your credit card," replied the warder.

"I am used to a matutinal smoke," said Glimson, taking his pipe and tobacco pouch from his pocket. "Will you get me a light."

The warder soon returned with a small electric apparatus.

"Good," said Glimson. "Now for breakfast. What is yours, James?"

"Coffee and eggs on toast," replied Ingleton. "I am not particularly hungry."

"Coffee and some fish will do for me," said Glimson.

"What fish?" asked the warder.

"Oh, any will do, I am not particular," said Glimson.

The warder left the room."

Glimson then approached Ingleton's bed and took

some of the torn shreds of paper and put them in his pipe, covering them with a little tobacco.

"A nice smoke," said Ingleton, with a smile.

"A good one at any rate," said Glimson, lighting his pipe. He puffed at it for a few minutes, making grimaces all the while.

"There is a nicer way than that to get rid of these scraps," said Ingleton. Getting a few more stripe from the mattress, and sticking them on a pin, he applied pressure to the small battery. The sparks consumed the paper, but gave him a slight shock.

"Well, which is the best," said Glimson with a laugh.

"One hurts and the other is abominable," answered Ingleton.

This time he took the remaining scraps, and lighting one, put it among the others on the table and left them to consume thus. Glimson mixed the ashes with those from his pipe, and then threw them on the floor and stamped them out.

"I wonder what Bligow is doing," he said.

"We shall soon know," said Ingleton.

"How?" asked Glimson.

"I leave that for him," said Ingleton. "I should like to know how my mother and Katie are; how they have taken the news of my imprisonment."

"Perhaps they will come to see you to day," said Glimson. "My people, the few I have, were prepared for this, and I gave them strict injunctions not to come here."

"There is nothing but to take matters easily," said Ingleton.

"Like me, you are pretty sanguine," said Glimson.

"Yes. May our hopes be justified," rejoined Ingleton, with some emotion. "For myself I am indifferent, it is for others that I am at present in torment."

"Are your papers safe?" said Glimson, turning the conversation.

"Yes," was the answer.

"I wonder who wrote that note," said Glimson.

"I do not know; it is hard to tell," replied Ingleton.

"Is not Antony a warder?"

"Oh! yes, I forgot him. Antony is here; he will be able to assist us," said Ingleton.

"But how came he to write 'Honour'?"

"He is not a member, but no doubt he has seen some of our pamphlets, and guessed the rest."

"Instinct," said Glimson.

After some time, during which a somewhat desultory conversation was pursued, the warder came in, followed by another, with the breakfast. These were placed upon a table. The warders left the room. Ingleton and Glimson fell to. The latter had hardly sipped at his coffee ere he sprang from his chair, crossed the room, looked through the aperture in the door, and returned to his seat.

"What is the matter?" asked Ingleton.

"I had a notion that we were being watched,"

said Glimson, using his fork at the fish, which was a piece of grilled cod. As he divided the fish, he caught sight of a little roll of paper. He started, but picked it up.

"Look here, James," he said, undoing the roll.

"Where did that come from?" asked Ingleton.

"It was in the fish," answered Glimson, spreading it on the table and speaking in low tones.

"Bligow's work," said Ingleton. "Are there any more slips?" They both began pulling their food to pieces. Ingleton found two between the eggs and the toast, and Glimson found another in his fish. They opened the rolls and spread them on the table.

Ingleton put the four slips together after some trouble and read in a low voice:

"Friends,—Be patient. We had a meeting last night. Be firm till death. We demand your release to-day. Trial, perhaps, to-morrow. Write through Antony if any instructions. Prepare for a rescue. Mrs. Ingleton, Miss Nell, and Miss Collingwood may come to-day to see you. Yours, H."

"Bligow is a brick," said Glimson.

"Yes, a true friend," said Ingleton, folding the slips and placing them in his pocket; and not a moment too soon, for the warder entered to take the crockery away.

"Let me have the *Half Hour*, said Glimson to him.

"All right," said he as he went out with the trays.

On his return Ingleton said, "Are we allowed to go in the open air?"

"It is very cold," answered the warder.

"That is not the question. Please attend to me," said Ingleton, with a slight ring of anger in his voice.

"The Governor attends you in half an hour, you can ask him," said the warder, and he slammed the door.

* * *

Pelham Stocking rose that morning somewhat earlier than usual. He intended to breakfast with Mr. Slowun; and on his way to that worthy's abode he saw some pamphlets lying in the street. Picking one up he read it through, his teeth chattering with cold. He put the pamphlet in his pocket. A moment later he noticed a placard over the contents bill of the *Half Hour*. He stopped and perused it aloud: "A petition for the immediate release of James Ingleton and Mark Glimson lies at the Dining Hall, and in the Alliance Club Smoking Room. Sign at once. Individualism to the fore. 'Honour.'"

"H'm," muttered Stocking, "this is bold, but an unwise course. I shall give information against you. Let me see, Harry Bligow and Arthur Caland to commence with." He paused and gnashed his teeth. In the course of his thought something had entered his mind. "No, I cannot; information would lead to evidence," muttered he, "and I would be altogether dead to Blanche Collingwood. I must work by other

methods. Slowun must assist me for a moment longer." He gazed at the notice and then hurried away, but was met by Harry Bligow who addressed him with, "Where were you last night?"

"Ill at home," answered Stocking.

"Sorry to hear that," said Bligow, with an incredulous look.

Stocking took no notice and said, "Anything particular happened?"

Bligow debated for a moment whether to tell anything, and said, "We had a meeting."

"Oh!" exclaimed Stocking in surprise.

"Yes," continued Bligow, "a big and enthusiastic meeting. We hold the reins; betrayal could not harm us."

Stocking winced at the thrust, and said, "Surely you do not infer that I would betray you?"

"I made a general statement," said Bligow, keeping his ground, "if the cap fits you can wear it."

Pretending not to notice the remark, Stocking said, "Is there anything I can do to aid the cause?"

"Sign the petition," answered Bligow; adding, "I suppose you have seen the notice?"

"Yes! I would do so with pleasure, but I mean anything besides that. Who is in command at present?"

"Caland and I are acting as provisional leaders," answered Bligow. "Come to the Alliance at twelve o'clock sharp, there will be a meeting then; better still, be there at nine and meet me. Can you?"

"I will—I consider it a command," answered Stocking.

"Consider it how you will, only come, it is important. Counsel is necessary and your advice will assist."

"Well, I shall be there. I must go now, I have something to do. "Good morning," said Stocking, and he hurried away.

Bligow looked after Stocking for a time, and muttered, "I shall keep you in my sight, for I do not trust you over much. Be careful, my quondam friend, if you dare attempt to fail us I will teach you the gains of double dealing." Then he continued walking in the direction of the Alliance.

In the course of the earlier part of the day the petition was signed by thousands; although, in fact, it was more than a petition, it was a demand for the release of the leaders of the Individualists, as the *Half Hour* termed them. A sort of feverish restlessness seized everybody. At two o'clock a meeting of the Senate was held. It was now obvious that some steps must be taken to cope with the movement. All pamphlets and placards had been seized by the police, and were laid on the table of State by the Chief Constable. Mr. Slowun, much against his will, was compelled to appear in the Senate Chamber.

While the sitting, which was a very protracted one, was being held, a mass meeting took place in the park, causing a scuffle with the police, who attempted to prevent the entrance of the body of

people. The meeting lasted but a few minutes, when a procession was make, headed by Bligow and Caland. The others, following ten abreast, and most of them armed with sticks, marched in the direction of the Hall of Legislation. Thousands lined the streets, and many were seen looking from the windows, watching in fear for the result. Bligow suddenly altered his mind; and the procession, following him, without guessing the reason for his erratic movements, turned towards the prison where Ingleton and Glimson were. Here a halt was called. Bligow shouted, "Cheers for our leaders—the Individualists." A sound as of thunder was the answer—a noise, which might have been mistaken for the battle of the elements, showed the spirit of the people, as with one accord all those possessed of sticks began rattling them on the stones.

This sound seemed ominous of coming strife. The mere onlookers hurried away as though they heard the rattle of fire arms in answer.

The procession re-formed, and then, choosing the broadest streets, the men marched to the Hall of Legislation. Here they were met by two companies of the London Defence Regiment, drawn up across the road to bar their passage.

When this mere handful, in comparison to the multitude, was seen, a general laughter ensued.

Evidently till now the people were good humoured. An officer with drawn sword stepped from the rank, and walking up to Bligow, who with his party was

twenty paces away, said, "Where are you going?"

"To the Hall of Legislation," answered Bligow.

"This crowd is not allowed beyond here," said the officer.

"Who says so?" asked Bligow with some impatience.

"I have my orders. If you advance, we fire," said the officer.

"I have thousands at my back; you have two hundred; do you not see the folly of this?" said Bligow.

"I must obey," answered the officer, turning as if to go.

"Is no one allowed to pass?" asked Bligow.

"Oh, yes, two or three, but not this crowd; they approach at their peril," said the officer, and he retired.

For a moment Bligow hesitated. The crowd was surging from side to side like the billows of the sea, but they were unarmed. This was what caused Bligow to hesitate. He turned round and shouted, "Friends, stay here while I and Buerlin go to the Senate. Caland and Cavendish will remain in command. If you hear a whistle, our friends are free; but should you hear the whistle a second time, we are refused our just demands—then, obey your leaders."

Taking a large roll of signatures with him, accompanied by Buerlin, who carried a similar roll, he walked to the Hall, passing through the cordon of

soldiers, up the steps to the Senate. Here his passage was barred; and an altercation took place, which was soon stopped, a messenger of the Senate, sent by the President, conducting them to the Bar of the Chamber.

This Hall was built in similar style to the Chamber of Convention, but smaller. At the moment Bligow and Buerlin entered, a scene of unwonted animation presented itself. All were standing except the President and the secretaries.

Mr. Slowun, his face deadly white with fear, supported himself by clutching the table.

Mr. Hedgeco, the Secretary of State, rose from his seat, and addressing the two bold intruders, said, "What want you here?"

"An answer to this," said Bligow, laying his roll of papers on the bar. Buerlin did likewise.

"What is that?" asked the Secretary of the Records.

"Am I allowed to read it?" asked Bligow.

"Will it take long?" queried the Secretary of the Chamber, with a quizzical look.

"Not very," said Bligow drily.

"Then read it, and quickly," said the President.

Bligow motioned to Buerlin, and he, unrolling one of the sheets, read, "We, the undersigned, demand——"

"You cannot demand," said the President.

Buerlin repeated the word—"Demand in the name of justice that James Ingleton and Mark Glimson,

now imprisoned for having uttered certain terms of speech considered treasonable, be immediately released. We further state that the aforesaid persons were provoked to make such utterances. We pray that the members of the Senate will at once consider our demand, which is made in the interest of the Commonweal.

"I repeat, you cannot demand," said the President.

"This bears at least twenty thousand signatures," said Bligow, as drily as before.

Mr. Slowun muttered, "Bother it."

"Were your demand signed by half the nation, we would not recognize it," said the President.

Bligow looked round the Chamber with slow deliberation. The proverbial pin might have been heard.

"This petition, our demand," said he, in a slow and thoughtful manner, "is signed by, as I said, at least twenty thousand persons outside; you can hear them; there are some fifteen thousand who await your answer. Opposed to them are two companies of the London Defence Regiment. What will you have? We demand, will you agree or not?"

All were awed by the almost solemn tones. No one spoke. Who would decide the momentous question; who would be answerable for the results? The silence was oppressive. All appeared to breathe with difficulty; even the usher stopped short in his walk.

Would no one break the silence; would no one

speak? The stillness of an assembly is more awe-inspiring than a death scene. The sight alone, of the Senators standing there mute as death itself, was sufficient to overawe all present; certainly it terrified them.

The cries of the people, which penetrated into the Chamber, came as a relief.

Bligow said, "For the last time—your decision."

"The Chamber must meet in Committee; we will give you an answer to-morrow, if you alter this to a petition," said Mr Hedgeco.

Mr. Slowun suddenly fell to the ground all of a heap. No one heeded him.

"We require your answer now! If I have to go away without it, I look upon it as a refusal," said Bligow, defiantly.

"Arrest these men," suddenly shouted the President.

The usher hurried to call the guard.

"Your blood be upon your head," shouted Bligow, producing a whistle from his pocket. He heard the tramp of the guard, and motioned Buerlin to stand a little aside; then two ear-piercing shrill whistles were heard. A great commotion resulted, and a shout which startled everyone—"Individualism to the fore! Individualism to the fore!" Again came the swell, filling the hall, the corridors, the chambers, with the cry—"Individualism to the fore!"

The guard entered, headed by an officer.

"Arrest them," screamed the President, white with anger.

"You have no warrant," said Buerlin, with a contemptuous smile.

Mr. Hedgeco came from the table towards the bar. "The order of the President is equal to a warrant. Arrest them!" he said.

The officer wavered.

"Do your duty!" shrieked the President, livid with rage.

The officer threw his sword upon the ground.

"I refuse," he said, in decisive tones."

"What!" said Hedgeco, trembling from mingled terror and anger.

"Individualism to the fore," answered the officer.

"The army is tampered with," came from many lips.

"Men, do your duty," said Hedgeco; "arrest these rebels."

The men—there were six of them—looked at each other, and then at the officer.

Bligow, till now grave, burst out laughing, and said, "Do you see the result of your refusal?"

Hedgeco sent for another *posse*. They entered with their guns at the shoulder. "Arrest them all," shouted Hedgeco. "The President demands it."

The officer, a subaltern, drew his men into single file, and said, to the surprise of Hedgeco, "We could not remove them, the gates are being battered in."

The surging crowd stood waiting impatiently for

Bligow's return; and when once the cry, "Individualism to the fore," had been raised, it was repeated times out of number, increasing in strength and volume with each repetition. Caland and Cavendish stood a few paces away, watching the scene in calm contemplation.

Cavendish whispered to Caland, "Let us give them something to do. Let us surround the building, and have the troops in our power; though I know that fifty of them belong to our party."

Caland agreeing to this, Cavendish made his way to the rear of the multitude, and directing them, the throng surrounded the building, keeping some twenty paces behind the troops. These at once turned round and faced this portion of the people. They were between two fires; they saw their peril. Those among them who belonged to the Individualists were debating how to act.

Suddenly a commotion was observed in the ranks. All eyes were fixed upon the soldiers. Those among them—Individualists, gave the well-known watchword which was answered by their friends; and before the others had time to recover from their surprise, ran pell-mell to the opposing party.

The commotion had hardly ceased when the two shrill whistles of Bligow were heard. A tremor of excitement seized all. Caland had trouble to make his voice heard. Cavendish, with some difficulty, got the people to stand clear of the gates. He took two glass globes from his pockets—they were filled with

a bluish powder.—"Stand away" he shouted, "Stand away!" The officer watched him with a frown; and as he saw Cavendish hurl the first pellet at the gate, he ordered his men to fire. A switch, switch; the sharp sound of rushing air was heard; but the rifles were empty. The officer gnashed his teeth. The globe had fallen against the stone coping of the rails. Half a dozen sparks were seen, then the hissing sound of escaping gas. Crash! crash!—a part of the railing and the stonework fell. A general rush was made for the breach.

"Load and fire," shouted the officer, waving his sword above his head, his eyes aflame and his mouth foaming with rage. But the pressure was too great. There was no elbow room, firing was impossible; the soldiers were wedged between the great mass. On they rushed over the frosted grass across the parterres, stamping and treading on everything, till it was beyond recognition.

Caland and Cavendish were at their head, armed with parts of the railings. "Down with the State!" was the cry, "Down with the Senate!" Sticks were waved on high. "Down with the State!" shouted Caland, his eyes flashing with the enthusiasm and excitement that possessed him. "Individualism to the fore!" was the rallying cry. Onward rushed the crowd, dragging the soldiers with them. The officials of the Hall scurried away pell-mell up the steps, through the entrance hall. They seemed possessed. They did not pause: up the stairs—they did not walk,

they did not run—they were pushed up. Once in the corridor they paused for breath. Then, amid a last cry, a cry of passion and hatred, a mighty shout of triumph, they burst into the Senate Chamber.

Bligow and Buerlin were standing with folded arms, a defiant and disdainful look upon their faces. The officer, who had thrown down his sword, (his name was Serle,) was leaning on the bar, the others grouped around him. Mr. Hedgeco, with hands clenched, and his lips white with rage, was staring at them. The President rose from his chair trembling, and attempted to speak, but the din drowned his voice. The secretaries rose, dropping their pens and upsetting the ink.

Mr. Slowun attempted to get to his feet, but tottered. Clutching at the table for support, he gave one last look at the mass that was entering, and with a final "Bother it," the accents broken by the death rattle in his throat, he fell on his face. Not a muscle moved—not another sound escaped him—he was dead. The terrors of the day had been too much for him.

"Here," shouted Bligow, as Caland and Cavendish, hot and perspiring, entered waving their iron staves. Hedgeco essayed to speak, but rage prevented him. With a single stroke Caland smashed the Bar, then all, carried forward by the throng, found themselves a moment later at the end of the Chamber. The paralysis which had seized the Senators at the

entrance of the people was dispelled. They rushed for the corridors—the people were upon them. Crash went the benches; smash went the windows—pandemonium let loose. A few heads were broken. Mr. Hedgeco was trampled in the crush. Down came the tribune with a yell from the people. The corpse of Mr. Slowun was ruthlessly thrown aside. Splashes of blood were on the sticks, and bruises on the heads of the Senators. At length Bligow managed to mount the secretarial table; but he was hoarse before he could make himself heard.

"Don't touch the books," he shouted. "This will do here."

The last senator escaped severely mauled.

"Silence!" shouted Caland, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Listen," said Bligow. "You have acted properly; this is a nail in the coffin of the State. Go, now, as you are directed: Cavendish, command the soldiers. Caland will erect barricades. Heughin, seize the cars. Those who are gunsmiths, capture your workshops. Electricians, take a storage house for us. Go! go! do as I say. Be near the prison in an hour."

Away they went, slipping, sliding down the stairs, hurrying to their respective tasks. A few minutes, and the last tramp of feet was heard.

Bligow stood for a moment surveying the scene: the disordered room, the up-torn seats, the shattered tribune, the broken windows, the floor covered with mire and strewn with the wounded. What a trans-

formation! But an hour ago so replete with comfort —one hour—one short hour—and now all was desolation. For the first time he noticed the dead Mr. Slowun. He sprang from the table and examined the body. He turned it over; the expressionless eyes were opened as in life, the mouth gaping, the fingers twisted in the agony of fear. For a moment he gazed at the dead man; his features softening in the presence of death—the unknown. Then he turned away.

Hatless, and with torn garments, he walked from the Chamber, meeting Buerlin at the door.

"Mr. Slowun is dead," said Bligow to him.

"Have you saved the books?" asked Buerlin.

"Yes," was the answer.

Except for the groans of the wounded, the silence of death prevailed in the Hall of Legislation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INGLETON sat meditating in his prison. Glimson was out in the courtyard. A sudden, and, at first, indistinct sound penetrated the room. He recognized it, it was the cry of the populace, "Individualism to the fore." A glow rose to his face; he stood up and listened; it came repeatedly; then the rattling of the sticks, which sounded like falling rain.

Glimson entered. "Do you hear?" he said.

"Yes," said Ingleton.

"It is the people going to the Senate demanding our release."

"Will they effect it?"

"Yes! Remember Bligow's words, 'Prepare for a rescue.'"

A warder entered, and turning to Glimson, beckoned him. Glimson followed; the door slammed; Ingleton was alone.

He seated himself, and for a time remained unmoved, with his legs crossed, his hands laying idly on his knees, his eyes staring far beyond the confines of the room. He began musing, thinking half aloud.

"Am I right? Yes, a thousand times, yes!" He sat up and clenched his hands, the nails digging deep into the flesh. "Men have been tyrants; now the

nation's guardians are tyrants. These tyrants have been removed before now; they shall be removed again; they are being removed at this moment. But am I right? Conscience, answer me." He closed his eyes and sat silent for a moment. "Yes," he muttered, after a pause, "I am right! Individuality prompts me. Conscience approves. God has given to each man a free will; who dares deny him the right to exercise it? They,"—he buried his nails deeper into his palms—"they must disappear: they who would stop it. Conscience approves. I do not reproach myself . . . Do I not?" He spoke louder, as if he expected the walls to answer. "No! Yes; if my deeds add one grey hair to my mother's head, or a tear to Nellie's eyes"—he shuddered—"a look of anguish to Katie's face, or bring a reproach from Blanche"—he trembled—"then—then, indeed, I reprove myself. If to-morrow were never to come; if yesterday were now; a month hence; a month ago; if time had ceased to mark the days; would I recall the past—would I?" He got up and paced the room. "No, I would not; I should not—blood before me; death behind me."

He shuddered at the scene his mind called up as in a fatamorgana. He saw it all. The confines of the room vanished as the picture grew more vivid. Unconsciously he sat down. In his mind he heard the shrieks of the dying, the groaning of the wounded; he saw the blood in the streets, and the stiff corpses strewn about. In the presence of this vista of the

future he trembled; the perspiration ran in great beads down his face. Suddenly he cried out, "The picture blurs—it's gone!" He became silent, and somewhat recovered himself. "Bah," he muttered, "the struggle will be great, it will be terrible, yet with an air gun, one puff of wind, and I shall be launched into eternity. It requires courage to do it. No, no, it requires courage to live, to struggle, to fight. Ah, fight to the bitter end"—and he sat bold upright—"to triumph! If those who call me their leader," he continued, "saw me now, how puny I should be; how little they know me. Do I know myself? Who does know himself? No one! It is good that it is so." Then he fell into a reverie, with eyes closed, and hands outstretched as if to grasp the imagery that his brain created. After a time he continued, "I let loose the dogs of war—I must, I have. Can I recall them? Can I pacify their cravings when once the nostrils have smelt the blood? Unbound the leash, they fly out, for me. What if *against* me?" His eyes opened to the fullest extent. "It is too much. Stop! I will stop all. My individuality shall cease." He sprang from his chair. "What! stop at this moment, now, when they are knocking at the Hall of Legislation? Back, my thought; disperse, my reveries. In prison—in danger—expecting my rescue—thousands at my call—I give way to idle thoughts when I should be full of action. The die is cast and is irrevocable. I would not have it otherwise. I must concentrate

my thoughts to actions, turn my actions for good; and with God's will, I will triumph. I shall triumph —I must—I *will* triumph!"

The entrance of a warder with tea (previously ordered), arrested his attention; and in the course of a few minutes he had completely recovered himself. As the warder, after having arranged the repast —which was for one only—was about to leave the room, Ingleton said to him, "Where is my friend?"

"He has been removed to room 19," answered the warder.

"What number is this room?" queried Ingleton.

"Six."

"Is 19 on this corridor?"

"Yes, the last room."

"Please bring me the *Half Hour*," said Ingleton, seating himself at the tea-table.

"I can only let you have the 3 o'clock one," said the warder.

"How is that?"

"I don't know," was the rejoinder, as he hastily left the room.

Ingleton heard the double click of the lock, and looked up. "Extra precautions," he muttered as he began his repast. About an hour afterwards he heard the steady tramp of soldiery in the corridor. A guard was being placed in the passages. A feeling of uneasiness came over him. What could this mean? He summoned a warder; but all his enquiries were futile; the attendant seemed dumb; he removed

the tea things noiselessly, and left the room. All was again silent; the tread of the sentries could no longer be heard. He lit a cigar and smoked it, reading over the manuscrips of his new ideal constitution. So we leave him for the present.

In the streets, within a radius of a quarter of a mile of the prison, the scene was one of unwonted animation. Men were hard at it with pickaxe and crowbar, breaking the roadway. Hundreds were working, under the direction of Caland. Suddenly an electric transport hove in sight. Caland ordered the driver to stop, and a hundred threatening crowbars were lifted to enforce the order.

The passengers alighted and decamped; the driver, crestfallen, took his departure, amidst the jeering of the people.

Baxter, who was among them, entered the car, and taking a wrench from his pocket, unscrewed the bolts which held the accumulator in position.

No sooner had he done this, than some zealous individual smashed the gear of the transport with a blow from a crowbar. Baxter got out; a moment later the car lay on its side across the roadway. Thus the first barricade was formed. Every car that arrived was treated in similar fashion. Boards were obtained from the factories, and nailed across. Loose mould, stones, anything that came handy, were piled in front, behind, and dropped inside the cars. What a commotion, what a turmoil, what noise! Some were shouting, others were active.

Hammers, chisels, crowbars, pickaxes, were at work, producing a mighty din. In three other streets the same was gone through, till four barricades were erected. Tidings arrived that a party, under Walter Wharham, had seized an electric storage house. Dixon, Vickers, and Hardale, accompanied by a few choice spirits, ransacked a gun factory. In the street, by the aid of the electric light, these were fitted together; benches were dragged into the open air; hammering and filing went on; and as the guns were fitted, they were despatched to those at the barricades. Electric bullets were made with great rapidity. These tiny leyden jars were soon constructed. Away they went; everyone was in a hurry, everyone was excited, enthusiastic, and busy.

In the midst of the greatest confusion stood a solitary woman, talking loudly, gesticulating, directing, and imparting part of her enthusiasm to those around her. It was the peaceful Miss Smithers. None so bold as she: first in the meleé and in the ransacking, last to leave the shops; the weight of her years disappearing entirely.

Outside the prison, Bligow and Buerlin arrived, having first made a round of the scene of action. Miss Smithers hurried to them. Jerrold Trevors and Perkins completed the group.

"What news?" queried Bligow of Buerlin.

"I have telephoned everywhere; in an hour all will be astir," answered Buerlin.

"How about the soldiers?" asked Bligow.

"Ten regiments on their way to London," answered Perkins.

Burham, staggering under the weight of a table, came up; behind him was Vickers, with half-a-dozen guns at his shoulder, which he distributed. Miss Smithers took one from him, saying, "Is it loaded?"

"Yes," answered Vickers, taking some bullets from his pocket, and laying them gingerly on the table.

"What's this for?" asked Bligow, pointing to a sheet of paper that Burham laid down.

"Plans," answered he, drawing a map of the city from his pocket.

"Jerry, draw a plan of the streets that are barricaded. Perkins, go and get me a dozen iglio bullets," said Bligow. All this did not take a minute.

"Now for the prison," said Buerlin, going to the door and kicking at it. "Open in the name of the people," he shouted.

Through the grating of the door came the muzzle of a gun. Buerlin drew aside. Away went the bullet, striking the wall opposite. This was the answer.

Buerlin came back to his partizans. "We must break into the prison," he said.

Bligow nodded. Perkins just then returned and handed him the glass bullets.

"Leave a guard at the barricade and draw a cordon round the streets," said Bligow, handing the plan Trevors had drawn; "and tell the people to come to me." Away sped Perkins and Vickers. Breathless

they returned with the rabble at their backs, armed with guns and crowbars, swords, sticks, and what not.

The bullets were taken from the table. Bligow sprang on it and delivered a peroration, which was answered by a dozen hurrahs!

Bligow then, taking two of the glass bullets as Cavendish had done, aimed them at the door. Without waiting for the result the crowd rushed forward, Miss Smithers and Perkins at their head. Cries filled the air. The door gave way with a crash. In they went, firing at those in front of them. Up went the crowbars, making hideous music on the wall. Bligow made for the front; he pushed through the tumult and obtained first place.

Another iglio pellet, and down came a partition. The firing was now fast and furious. The warders made a stand at the end of the passage, assisted by the guard. Call answered call; shriek echoed shriek. The bullets found their billets on both sides. In the narrow passage the contending parties faced one another.

Suddenly the light went out—all was in darkness. A general stampede was made on both sides. Groping their way in the dark, each party rushed back. Some were trampled under foot never to rise again. The bullets, whizzing past, gave many a sad termination to many a young life. The scene might have been a picture from the *Inferno*. Someone arrived with a hand incandescent lamp. Light!

—thank God—light! The firing then recommenced with fierceness; the walls rang with the echoes; the dead lay stark and rigid on the ground. Miss Smithers was wounded by a bullet passing through her hand. Bligow caught hold of her under the heavy fire, and bound her hand with a handkerchief. The ranks of the warders were thinning. Unflinchingly they held their ground. A rush was made; down fell the warders; headlong they ran to a further corridor.

Onward rushed Bligow, firing as he went. Where were Ingleton and Glimson? As they ran along, room after room was forcibly entered, and everything smashed in wanton mischief. The ammunition was giving out when they reached Ingleton's room. A crowbar settled the question. Ingleton heard the din, and called out. The news passed from mouth to mouth—the leaders were discovered. In went the door. Miss Smithers, covered with blood, fainted at the first sight of her nephew. Not a moment was lost. A gun was handed him; and out he came, directing them to Glimson's room, and carrying his aunt with him. Just as they arrived there, Antony was unlocking the door. A bullet grazed his left ear, but he did not notice it. As the door opened Glimson rushed out with the cry, "Down with the State."

"Leave the prison," shouted Ingleton. Out they went with the spoils of battle, carrying the dead and dying with them.

Once in the street the strife ceased. Ingleton and

Glimson were cheered, and so was Antony. Amid continuous hurrahs they were carried through the streets.

Pelham Stocking, armed with a gun, was at one of the barricades. He felt himself drawn by the cries of those who formed the procession. He stationed himself at the corner of a street where he was told the people would pass. He shouldered his gun as he heard it near him. He cared not what became of him: he had lost in the struggle. Yet even at this moment, the conviction that all was not lost came over him. He smiled bitterly and grimly. He did not believe it. What could he do? Something murmured, "Kill him." He looked round; the crowd was increasing. He felt the gun at his shoulder. Who put it there? He pondered over the subject. He did not know—his brain, at other times so clear, was muddled. Now he stood there like a mere automaton.

The front of the procession turned the corner. He glanced up. Ingleton came in sight. A look of terror and anger came into his eyes. He pressed the trigger of his gun. Swish! The bullet fell some distance from Ingleton. A rush was made for him. Unconsciously he stood stock still, the gun at his shoulder, his forefinger at the trigger. His gaze riveted on Ingleton. They caught hold of him, and dragged him towards Ingleton, he offering no resistance.

Glimson, Antony, and the others, came up. Ingleton sprang from the seat on which he was being carried, Glimson and Antony did likewise. Stocking

turned slowly round; he caught sight of Antony; his face blanched, his lips fell, his eyes fixed in terror. As one mesmerised he stared at Antony. One wild shriek, one cry of terror, of baffled hatred, and then a horrible convulsive laugh—a hideous mirth. The crowd drew back, peering in his face. Those who held him were so terror-stricken that they let go their hold. He would have fallen had not Ingleton caught him. That laughter continued. Ingleton looked him in the face with a stern expression. It affected nothing. He laughed—it was the laugh of madness, the mockery of the senses—worse than death itself: Stocking was mad!

During this scene the regiments had arrived, and were already on their way to the neighbourhood of the riots. The escaped senators held a consultation in the Hall of Justice, and ordered the regiments from the western counties to London. Two regiments were ordered to tackle the first barricade, and give no quarter. Arrived there, the first pitched battle took place. The soldiers stopped within eighty paces of the barricade, and called for surrender. A defiant yell was the answer. The windows of the nearest houses were thrown open. In the gleam of the electric lights the barrels of the guns were seen.

"Halt!" cried the officer. "Load!"

Caland, hot and perspiring, in his shirt sleeves, mounted the barricade, with a gun in his right hand.

"Friends," he shouted, "now is the hour, now is the time! The conscience of the people is awakened. Friends, you must do your duty. Soldiers, will you shoot your brothers? Do not, I pray you! If you fire, it will be answered a thousand-fold." He looked at the soldiers. A thousand guns were levelled at him. Moved by a sudden impulse, he shouted, "Wait one minute—one minute for prayer; and then for death. We ask no quarter, we give none." With his eyes closed steady, as if in his name, he said, "Eternal God, forgive the sins that are committed this night; let the grave absolve all trespassing. Guard the widows and orphans, whose husbands and fathers will die this night." At this moment all was silent.

Then the fire began: one long continuous swish from the windows, from the soldiers, from the people, who clambered to the edge of the barricade. Caland seemed to bear a charmed life. He sent a messenger to Ingleton, bidding him good-bye. As he turned once more to fire his gun with his usual coolness, he noticed the ranks of the soldiers were thining. The officer was the same as the one who had held the entrance to the Hall of Legislation that afternoon. Caland picked him out as he was giving orders for storming the barricade. On the soldiers came at the double, under the heavy fire from the windows and the roofs. Caland adjusted his gun. Swish! The officer was down. Caland followed him with his eyes. A moment later he was

seen to throw up his arms and stagger. Backward he fell, caught by a dozen willing arms. Tenderly they laid him down, and administered some liquid. But to no use; the pallor and clamminess of death was over him—not a breath, not a move—the electric bullet had done its work. Thus fell the first of the leaders in the struggle for individualism.

The battle continued, the men grew bolder, and the firing grew fiercer. George Cavendish arrived with a hundred soldiers under his leadership. They made a sortie. The struggle was terrible; both parties made a gallant stand. At last the guardians of the State made off in flight.

To return to Ingleton. After the scene already related, he had Stocking conveyed to a place of safety; and hastily made a round of the barricades, which now numbered six. The sight of Caland, laying on a hurriedly constructed bier, brought tears to his eyes. Turning to Glimson (who was with him) he said, in tones full of anguish, "Where is all his enthusiasm; where are the happy dreams? Gone for ever!"

Glimson hurried him away to the neighbourhood of the prison, where a tent had been hastily pitched, a store having been wrecked for the purpose. In it were a table, a few chairs, and a mattress. On the table were pen, ink and paper, a gun, and a dozen or more bullets. Ingleton seated himself, and calling the others to him, gave half-a-dozen orders one after another.

"The people are hungry; where is the nearest dining hall?"

"Just across the road," answered Vickers.

"Have food prepared, and rations served to everyone," answered Ingleton.

Vickers hurried away on this urgent matter.

"Have a barricade erected at the end of the Avenue; we must not be surprised."

Hardale understood the work.

"Glimson, you had better handle the soldiers now. Tell Cavendish to go to bed, he has been up all night. Will you send him here first?"

"Yes," answered Glimson, picking up a gun and going out of the tent.

"Where is my aunt?" asked Ingleton.

"She is all right now; Dr. Shindle is attending her," answered Bligow.

"My friend, all my thanks I give to you; you have been about all night, so you had better take some rest now. The battle is only just beginning. Who will undertake to collect a band of doctors? Surely there are some medical students with us."

"Yes, I will get them," answered Bligow.

"Let them wear a white band on the left arm," said Ingleton; and turning to Perkins, "Perkins, you give orders that a search be made for the dead."

"Someone get me a dozen iglio bullets and a mortar, I am going to demolish the prison."

Antony entered the tent, and walking up to Ingleton tapped him on the arm. Ingleton looked

up and nodded. Taking a pen he hastily wrote two notes to his mother and Blanche; folding them, he wrote the superscriptions—two words—"Mother" and "Blanche," then turning to Antony he said slowly and softly, "Take these for me, no one will harm you."

Antony nodded, and taking the notes and two bullets, he strapped a gun on his shoulder.

A moment after he was speeding on his message of love. When he arrived at Mrs. Ingleton's he found Katie ill. The absence of James had aroused her suspicions. To allay her distress the truth was told her. The child shed no tears, but from that moment the pallor on her face increased; the little form, so thin, so feeble, became more emaciated than before. Ever and anon the word "James" rose to her feeble lips. Her dulled eyes were raised in questioning appeal to the All Ruler, which gave cause for many a tear to the silent watchers at the bedside. Antony found her so; and ever gentle end loving, told in his broken, stuttering accents, a tale of hope. The child listened eagerly, but not a sign did she make; and when Antony sat himself, gun at his feet, in silent meditation, watching every move of the body, it drew from his eyes a silent tear, and caused him to murmur once, "Lord, why is this so?"

Once more we are in the streets. The rations are being served out; the dead gathered together; a watch set; and a continual hammering and filing where the arms are being forged.

Ingleton entered the prison, and hastily released

all the prisoners. Among them was a man, tall and bearded, but on his face was a look of despair, which did not totally disappear when Ingleton said, "You are free." The prisoners gone, Ingleton set the mortar in position, loaded, and applying pressure, the charge sped on its course, passing into the prison and exploding with a shower of sparks and a fizz-fizz. Down came the supports of the building; in fell the roof amid a shower of bricks, stones, morter, dust, and beams. Then the people fell to work with pickaxes, crowbars, hatchets, and hundreds of tools. The prison was razed to the ground. Then it was set alight, and a fire which lit up the town in a fierce lurid glare, and heated the glass roof of the town, to the imminent danger of everybody, continued to rage till the morning.

CHAPTER XXV.

It is morning, the morning following the evening referred to in the foregoing chapter. Events come and go, crowding each other out of the view in such rapid succession that a lifetime seems to have sped in four and twenty hours. Yesterday morning England rose with a certain amount of anxiety, watching eagerly for events. Now there were events enough in all conscience. It is still bitterly cold, yet thousands have slept in the streets, leaning on their guns and nodding on the barricades, while the guards do their sentry go. To the surprise of Ingleton, who had been hard at work during the watches of the night, no attack was made.

As already stated, an electric storage house had been seized. Here were found tons of coals. They were brought into the streets and huge fires lit, around which the people are taking their morning meal. Great cans of coffee, tea, cocoa, and other liquids are handed round; and the people, seated beside the fire, take the drink with a gusto as if they had spent all their lives round camp fires, and were perfectly used to it. Hardly has the last mouthful been eaten, when the word is passed round. In a moment all are on their feet. Heughin arrives at Ingleton's tent with the information that he has

twenty cars under his command, besides "my own." Will Ingleton give him command of them all?

"Yes," says Ingleton, "you have taken them, command them."

Streathan arrives next. "I have intercepted all communications, except for ourselves," he says.

Glimson, who is laying full length on the ground, shouts, "You're a brick."

Miss Smithers, with her hand bandaged, enters the tent with decisive steps, and seats herself on a stool.

"How are you getting on?" she says.

"Famously," answered Ingleton. "We have got them in our power."

A moment later, and a messenger arrives with a letter from Buerlin, who had returned to Manchester.

Ingleton breaks it open quickly. Glimson jumps to his feet as Ingleton reads,

"Friends,—

"This is the first moment I have found to write. Here all is in open revolt—four barricades up. In Birmingham the same. We will prevent any troops coming to London. Are in possession of the Central Station. This remains my headquarters. Had one encounter with troops; number of dead not counted. Telephone orders. You will receive messages from Birmingham, Glasgow, and Newcastle in a few hours. Have no fears for result. Will the *Half Hour* come out?

"Yours to the end,

"BUERLIN."

Ingleton turns round. "We must seize the *Half Hour* offices to-day."

"We must issue some proclamation," said Glimson.

Perkins entered. "The troops are coming with mortars to attack barrier 2," he said.

"Good," replied Ingleton, shaking his gun. "Glimson, Bligow, Cavendish, Hardale, Hollis, Beauclerc, command the other barriers. Fitzwalter, I leave you here, protect my aunt."

Perkins turns to him. "We will break the roof," he said.

"All right," remarked Ingleton, preparing to leave the tent.

"Lend me a car," said Perkins.

"Away to the barricades," shouted Ingleton, as he left the tent.

A sudden thaw set in . . .

We are in the thick of the fight now. Crash! crash! crash! What a splintering of wood, and a cracking of glass. Still the fight goes on unceasingly. Swish, swish, go the bullets, as they fly hither and thither. Cries! screams! groans! What a tumult is this battle in the streets. Still that crash, and a sound of breaking iron. Ha! run, run for your lives! Fly from the barricades! fly from the streets! fly for your lives! all you who value them.

Has the last day come? Will the continual whirl cease? No! no! The great glass roof is being dislodged. What a shivering of glass. How the splinters

fly. Oh! what wails go up to the heavens, as it falls piece by piece on those below. Run! What use? for it falls indiscriminately on friend and foe alike. The firing ceases. Each seeks the best shelter available. Ah! those groans, those shrieks. Oh, that blood, flowing everywhere—the life fluid running into the gutters.

Look! yonder man dodges the falling splinters before him. Steady! How cautious that eye, how calculating his movements, as those spars fall in front of him. Oh! he throws up his arms and falls—falls. He has solved the future. A beam from behind has crushed his skull. Kismet! Fate! Too late! Futile to dodge the pre-ordained; for it was the last piece that fell in that street. Death was more cunning than he. How horrible the carnage. Cruel, miserable, unhappy individualism, to cause such havoc . . .

Drip! drip! Large drops of melted snow are falling on the faces of the wounded and dying, as they lie huddled about. The wounded are refreshed; and those strong enough open their mouths to catch the falling drops. The rain mingles with the blood; and a thin stream of the red fluid trickles down the faces of all lying there.

Bye-and-bye the rain falls heavier, fiercer; and the wind blows and howls. How hideous! like the jackal crying for its prey. How black looks yonder sky. Now to the left, now to the right, rushes the wind, moaning and shrieking. Ah! ah! ah! What is that

laughing? Nothing; only the wind. Whence comes; where to goes it; who knows?

Still the sleet-rain falls, still the wind howls, still more sombre is the hue of heaven. Ah! the rain is washing the blood away, the wind disperses the fragments that did the evil work. The black scowl of heaven will give way to brighter looks, when the last stains of the battle between man and man shall have been washed away.

How many, yet alive, remember that damp cold morning: The sleet falling steadily; the people tired, wet, and shivering; the dead strewn across the barricades, receiving death's lavations from the storm; the corps of doctors, with the white bands on their left arms, hurrying from corpse to corpse, pronouncing that ominous word, "Dead"; the bandaging of the wounded; the wiping of the blood from the streaming faces. There are yet those alive who performed yeoman's work on that dreary, forlorn morning.

But to return to it. When the rain ceased the people returned to the barricades. The one at which the hardest fighting had taken place was so damaged by the iglio bullets as to be rendered useless. Ingleton ordered a fresh one to be erected. He, himself, helped to carry the heaviest loads, to drag the beams, and to hammer then in position. This barrier promised to be more substantial, for it mainly consisted of pieces of the fallen roof. Hardly had they finished when the troops came up to renew

the attack. They were received by a shower of bullets which destroyed their first line. They wavered. "The first position in England for the man who brings Ingleton's body, dead or alive," shouted the officer.

The troops re-formed at the double, pouring in volley after volley as they neared the barrier. On they came, replacing those who fell. They were seen to load with iglio bullets. Swish! They poured their volley into the embattlement, the sparks fell in showers. A rumbling sound was heard. A great iron girder began tottering. Down it came with the sound of an earthquake. Ingleton, on the top, assays to retreat from the falling structure. A whole volley is fired at him. He falls. The man with the beard, and that look of despair, clutches hold of him. Is he dead? No! not even wounded, except for a bruise from the fall, which saved his life. In a moment he is on his feet surveying the conflict. The nearest soldier is yet five paces away from the barricade. Ingleton springs on the tottering edifice, and loads his gun. Swish! The man will never reach it.

Sheltering himself from the volleys that are aimed at him, he dispatches a message to Cavendish to bring all the soldiers he has out of a barricade into the streets. His object is to turn his opponents' flank. The soldiers are now scrambling on to the barricades. Inch by inch the position is contested. The men are at too short a distance to fire. Clutching their guns by the muzzle they start clubbing and brain-

ing. A hand to hand encounter ensues. A hundred times the soldiers are driven from the barricade. A hundred times they boldly mount it. The minutes fly. Many bite the dust, and yet the position remains unaltered. Ingleton is everywhere, cheering the men on, wielding his gun with redoubled fury; striking, firing, loading, in constant succession. Shouts are heard in the distance. The soldiers turn to see. Cavendish is coming with five hundred men. With a cry as of an animal at bay, the soldiers turn to the fresh onslaught. With a cheer from Ingleton, those at the barricade scramble to the top and pour a deadly volley into the soldiers; then over, led by Ingleton, firing as they go. It is now their turn to attack. Fast and furious is the battle. Now they scamper to the rear, now they rush forward; for one that falls a dozen take his place.

The air is darkened. A dozen aerial cars appear in sight. Slowly they descend to within two hundred yards of the ground. Heughin's voice can be heard issuing a command. A volley is poured from the air. Now the battle is more grim than ever. Ingleton, with his men, retreat to the barricade as the shower of bullets descends on the soldiers. What a carnage! It is raining death! From the aerial cars, from the barricade, from the further end of the street, come the bullets, making hideous noise as they fly. At length the few remaining soldiers are in full flight. With a ringing cheer, once more Ingleton scrambles over the barricade, thousands following him. How

they run—like a pack of wolves in full cry. A few minutes and the sternly contested struggle is won.

The soldiers are gone. Cavendish comes up with his remaining men, many of whom are wounded. Cavendish, himself, has evidences of the struggle. His clothes are torn, his musket broken, and a thin stream of blood is running from his right hand. His little finger has been shot off. The cars descend; and Heughin, Wilkins, Perkins, Burham, and Baxter alight. All shake hands.

"Have a barrier erected lower down," says Ingleton.

Perkins goes to fulfil the order.

At the other barriers the struggle has been severe; and when the leaders meet in Ingleton's tent they present a sorry, tattered, spectacle, all torn and dishevelled, covered with blood and dust.

An hour afterwards despatches came from the provinces, all full of good tidings. Then some one comes in with a copy of the *Half Hour*, and a proclamation. A price is set on Ingleton's head. Mr. Hedgeco, Secretary of State, has signed the proclamation.

The rations are again served out: the people, sitting, standing, smoking, and recounting their share in the morning's work. The wounded are carted away to a huge tent that has been erected for their reception. The dead are gathered. It is decided to give Caland a public funeral. Ingleton issues the first proclamation, and signs it with his name. It is

posted everywhere; it is despatched to the provinces. Not a moment's rest—continual work. The proclamation is read by thousands. Here it is:—

"(1) The Social State is hereby declared annulled.

"(2) None of its commands are to be obeyed.

"(3) A committee of public safety will be appointed, and a new form of Government ordained.

(Signed,)

"JAMES INGLETON."

At three o'clock, the last edition of the *Half Hour* comes out. Then the offices are stormed, and the Individualists take possession. The offices are almost intact. The compositors are set to work; and a four paged paper is issued. Across its pages, in large letters, the proclamation is printed.

The day is full of incidents. The houses are fired, the stores rifled, the barricade war is continued. Ingleton can be found everywhere. Glimson finds no time to give his arms the habitual swing. How he fights, how he brandishes his weapon. Antony comes to headquarters; he tells Ingleton that Katie is worse.

Walter Wharham, having obtained leave from Ingleton, now prepared to fulfil a desire of his. With the aid of his men, he rifled one of the large factories, where iron piping, for the sewers and water-conduits, were made. Having obtained about a mile of piping, he had it fixed together, laying it towards barricade 3, the nearest to his electric

storage house. Then, by the aid of elbows and other joints, he fixed it to three other barricades. This occasioned several hours' work, despite that hundreds of men, with all the machinery available, assisted at the enterprise. He had some of the masonry of the fountains broken, and the water brought to his pipes; the caps screwed down; and then water commenced flowing through the pipes, which were raised on trestles over the barricades. Through one of the traps in the pipe, Wharham conducted several wires, which at a given signal were charged with electricity. This, in Wharham's opinion, would resist an army.

The globes of the arc lamps having been shattered by the fallen roof, there was no light, save for the glare of the great fires, lit at frequent points along the streets, to dispel the all-prevailing gloom.

At nine o'clock a message arrived at Ingleton's tent, that a meeting of the Senate was being held, in secret, in the Hall of Justice.

Ingleton, now having the printing press at his disposal, ordered that no papers or books should be destroyed; and then, followed by three thousand armed men, made a sally, and marched to the Hall of Justice. The Senate was still sitting. The people stopped, and set up a terrific shouting. Ingleton sent a messenger to the Senators, requesting them to come out. They refused.

"What shall we do?" asked Ingleton of Glimson.

"Shoot them," answered he laconically, at the same time loading his gun.

"Yes, we shall settle them now," rejoined Ingleton, entering the building.

A rush was made. "Down with the State," was the cry.

Smash went the windows. A volley broke them. In they scampered, up the stairs, down the stairs, breaking windows, tables, chairs, everything that was breakable; along the corridors, firing everywhere. The Senators had gone. Away went the mob in search of them, looting everything. The Senators were not found; but the mob did execution. A large force of police, armed with guns, met them. A fight took place. Twice Ingleton was captured; twice he was released.

They yelled like beings possessed. They turned the flank of police, putting them to flight. Onward they went, in full cry, giving no heed to the dead or dying. Behind them, a lurid glare, and a volume of smoke, told that the Hall of Legislation was burning. The books (or some hundred of them) had been saved. Onward they went, to be met by a regiment of soldiers. Fierce and furious was the struggle. The people broke into the houses, smashing the windows; and finding their way to the roofs, fired on the soldiery. Whole divisions fell, to enter Eternity.

Glimson, next to Ingleton in the thick of the battle, shot the chief officer dead, and then called

for a rush. A stampede was made; over the dead and dying they ran. Suddenly they neared a barricade. A battle was going on there with another regiment. The people again fled to the houses. Short canon or mortars were loaded with iglio bullets. The execution was terrible. Houses came down, crushing those inside. Suddenly was heard the sound of rushing water. Walter Wharham was bringing his apparatus into play. A moment later the streets were flooded with the water charged with electricity. The soldiers, who received the charge, felt their legs gripped, then a terrific shock, and they fell to the ground. Ingleton, who knew what caused this, retreated with his men, first constructing a rude dam with the fallen masonry. The soldiers, panic stricken by this unknown force, rushed hither and thither, as they saw their companions fall. Still the water kept sweeping them down. At length it ceased, and they made off, their uniforms covered with mire, and carrying their dead with them.

The rest of the night was given to looting and burning the town. A dozen fires were lighted at once, and round the flames the people sat, taking their meal.

It was a curious scene, as one by one, tired with the day's exertion, they fell asleep round these watch fires. The flickering shadows, the smoke, the smell, the sudden glare of the flame, the burst of light and then darkness, the dead cast about, on all sides the

moaning of the wounded; in the shadows or in the light, the scene was unearthly. The watch, doing its silent guard; the guns piled up; the dismantled houses; the dying embers; the smouldering ruins; the moon's rays penetrating through the darkening clouds—all seemed unreal. Now and then, cries were heard coming from those asleep. In their dreams they evidently re-enacted their day's doings. The cries awakening the echoes of the night, caused many to rise from their slumber and reach for their guns. The silence reassured them. Slowly the night wears on; the stars come and go with their flickering light, and the pale moonbeams tell the tale of the waning hours. The dogs are barking in the stillness. Thus that awful night passed away.

In Ingleton's tent, around which are clustered a dozen men, a light is burning. He is sitting at a table writing rapidly. On the mattress, stretched full length, lies Glimson, fast asleep, a gun at his feet. Tired nature has given out. In a corner, with his feet on the ground and his head on a box, sleeps Bligow. In front of the tent a coal fire is burning right merrily.

In the large tent, where the wounded lie, the medical students and doctors, conspicuous by the bands on their left arms, walk noiselessly up and down. The patients, lying on rudely constructed beds, lie tossing in the delirium of fever. On a table stand phials, glasses, and surgical apparatus. Miss

Smithers, whose hand is healing, holds watch with the doctors. As we rapidly glance at her, we notice her eyes are softer than is their wont, and she has lost some of her rotundity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE morning dawns with a clear blue sky; and as the hours advance, the wintry sun shines with unusual warmth. With the break of day all is astir. The barricades are repaired, the streets cleansed, and a truce is declared in order to bury the dead.

Preparations are made for the funerals. Coffins are rudely constructed. Messages are brought to Ingleton of his sister's illness; and letters from Nell and Blanche: letters of love, which cause tears to rise to his eyes. But he has little time for emotion; the funerals will commence.

Tens of thousands line the streets; and the wind fans the cheeks of the crowd. How grave each face; how gloomy the tones of greeting; what stern lines on all countenances. The very urchins stop still amid the throng. The sparrows cease their chirping, giving over to the overpressing dull murmur, which alone signifies the enormous concourse of people.

Youth, with smiles upon its cheeks, or its sneers of scepticism, has a drawn face. Giddy girls and women forget their coquetry and blandishments. Old men, leaning on their sticks, nod slowly and stiffly, and greet each other with mute and scared expressions.

The sun disappears behind a cloud; the breeze gives over, and even the humming sound of the concourse dies away. The measured tread of thousands are heard. The funeral processions are making their way—plain deal coffins, each borne by six men. The first approaches; it is here; it passes along. There lies the body of Arthur Caland. Slowly the mournful procession passes—slowly: an awe striken scene, a terrible one. Sobs are heard as the cortege winds its way. Sorrowfully, with moistened eyes all glance upward, for the angel of death is hovering nigh.

Bareheaded all stand, with reverence and fear. Here is sadness, desolation, grief, here where Individuality ends!

We are at the grave. Enormous pits are dug. The tomb! What a bitter thought; what a thud in the very sound of the word as we utter it, striking on the ears like the falling coffin. Over the bleak fields the wind blows harsh and stern. Cries are heard; tears course down the cheeks; sobs rise; there is a night wail of anguish and of woe; and strong men, overpowered by their emotions, shed tears of bitter anguish at the grave, men who saw their friends fall by their side without a murmur; men, with eyes dim, who not many hours ago were thirsting for blood. What pathos is there in humanity! Hear the dull thud of the falling earth. See the graves slowly fill. The distance between those who live, and the departed loved

ones, slowly widens, as grave after grave is filled. Would you only say,

> "Life is
> A painful passage o'er a restless flood,
> A vain pursuit of fugitive falsehood,
> A scene of fancied bliss and heart-felt care,
> Closing, at last, in darkness and despair"?

The funerals are over. It is dusk, and the people return to their homes, the barricades, and camp fires. In a deserted street, at a little distance from the crowd, James Ingleton is walking. He has made a detour alone, for the first time since the outbreak of the revolt. The stillness suits him, for he is puzzling his mind how to bring matters to a decisive crisis. Had he looked above, to the walls of the gardens on his left hand, he might have seen a black object crawling along the coping. But the perturbation of his mind does not permit him to do so. He strolls along; the object continues its cat-like movements till, coming directly opposite Ingleton, it throws itself over the edge and drops to the ground. The actions betray it to be a man. Stealthily and carefully he hides in the deep shadow.

Ingleton gives no heed to the strange conduct of this person. He passed him, still in meditation. The climber gets up, turns stealthily round, looks up and down the street, and with noiseless tread follows Ingleton. When right behind him, he clutches the leader of the Individualists at the neck, with a terrible outburst of laughter.

"He! he! he!" The fingers close round the throat. It is Pelham Stocking, escaped from confinement. Ingleton, feeling the grip, attempts to turn. The hands of Stocking tighten as if to strangle him. In the madman's eyes is a fierce, fiendish light; his lips quiver, and his whole body shakes with the derisive laughter. Ingleton essays to speak, but the words gurgle in his throat from the pressure. Already the veins of the forehead stand out like whipcords, and the mouth is gasping for breath. Ingleton guesses with whom he is dealing. He puts his hands behind him, grasps Stocking's legs, and with an effort he tugs at them till Stocking loses his footing. Both men fall with a thud; Stocking, underneath, looses his hold. Ingleton is on his feet in a moment, facing his adversary, still prostrate on his back. He looks at Stocking with an unwavering gaze. In his mind he asks himself: Is it the man or the lunatic who would throttle him? He is unarmed, in a deserted street, alone with a lunatic, who is lying on the ground. What shall he do?

He steps back, still regarding Stocking unflinchingly, so that the madman cannot grasp his feet. Still on the ground, Stocking gives a convulsive, hideous laugh, which echoes through the street; his fingers twitch; his eyes are rolling; his hair, matted, covers his forehead. Again he laughs, "He! he! he!" He attempts to rise, but sinks back to the earth. He laughs and sobs by turn—he is raving! Ingleton continues to regard him sternly. The sobs

grow frequent, the laughter fainter. Still he remains in the same position. A violent shudder seizes Stocking. He springs up clutching the air. Down he falls with a thud. Now it is all sobs; the eyes stop rolling, transfixed to a glassy stare; the hands fall listless to his side. Slowly he seems to sink away. The eyelids close, the limbs appear lifeless, and he breathes slowly. Ingleton remains immoveable on the spot. Ingleton has subdued Stocking; the effect, the scene, has mesmerised him.

Footsteps are heard; several persons approach, among them is Antony, the man who saved Ingleton's life at the barricade, and the guards who are in search of the escaped lunatic. Surprised at the spectacle, the antithesis of what they expected, they grasp Ingleton, who with an effort turns from the prostrate man and says:

"For God's sake remove him."

They recognise him now; and the guards take hold of Stocking, who to all appearances is lifeless, and carry him away.

Ingleton looks once more at the departing figures. His throat hurts him, he still feels the fingers at his neck, and he speaks huskily. Then, accompanied by the other two, he makes his way to his tent. The revolt has been forgotten; in his mind are two questions: Who was it that wished to kill him, the man or the lunatic? The queries are unanswerable.

Arrived at the tent, which was deserted except for a sentry who kept guard, Ingleton threw himself on

the mattress, the question still in his mind. After a time he fell asleep.

At midnight, a meeting of the leaders was held in the tent. Ingleton was seated at the table, a map of London before him; opposite him sat Fitzwalter, with a pile of correspondence in front of him. Glimson has a plan of the barricaded streets in his left hand, and a pencil in his right. He swings his arms; evidently he is thinking. Bligow and Heughin sit together, further to the left of Ingleton. Beauclerc, Cavendish, Hollis and Wharham are seated on a box. Perkins, Baxter and Burham occupy another. Thompson, who no longer performs his war dance, was on guard.

Ingleton looked up from the map, and said, "We have now to consider what steps to take. The day after to-morrow the truce ends; we have then to cope with the Government, and effect a crushing defeat. Here (pointing to the letters) we have received numerous correspondence from every centre. All along the line we have won, except in Northampton, where both parties are equal. Buerlin, who seems a dozen persons rolled into one, writes that six regiments are making forced marches to London. They will soon be here. Now we must take action."

"We have seven thousand soldiers with us," said Cavendish.

"Let them wear a red band on their left arm, to distinguish them," rejoined Ingleton.

"We must arrange a plan, that all sections act together," said Glimson, with a swing of his arms.

Jerrold Trevors entered, tugging at his moustache. He seated himself on the mattress.

"That is exactly what I have in view," said Ingleton.

"Have we sufficient ammunition?" asked Hollis.

"They have been casting the electric bullets night and day since the commencement," said Bligow.

"How about the iglio powder?" said Beauclerc.

"Any amount," rejoined Bligow.

"We have plenty of arms, bullets, and powder," said Ingleton. "We have thousands of men, but all this will avail nothing without concerted action. Here is a map of London; let us transfer the plan of the barricades to it first, then we have something definite."

Glimson called out the streets that were barricaded, and Ingleton marked the spots on the map.

When finished, Ingleton said, looking at the map, "We have sixteen barricades, with the spot we now occupy as a fair centre; and the Hall of Justice as our most distant position."

Glimson nodded.

"Now, what I propose is, that we capture the City Hall, the Hall of Antiquites, and that of Legislation."

The others looked up at the bold proposals.

Glimson, with a swings of the arms, said, "And the Aerial Station."

"And the park," said Bligow.

"And the air pumps," said Fitzwalter.

"And the Water Works, and the Central Storage Station," said Wharham.

Trevors, rising, said, "That would form four sides of a hexagon."

Ingleton turned, and said, "You are clever with your pencil, draw a fresh plan for us."

Perkins obtained some paper, and Trevors sat down. Taking a compass and a rule from his pocket (he was an architect by profession), divided the sheet into squares, and by the aid of the map, drew a plan of London, while the others conversed in low tones.

"Have you heard from Hampden?" said Cavendish to Glimson.

"Yes," answersd he. "I should not be surprised if he came to-night."

Hampden just then came in.

"'Talking of angels,' etc.," said Cavendish.

"Well, here I am," said Hampden. "Thanks for that car," turning to Heughin.

"How are you getting on?" said Hollis.

"Warm work," rejoined Hampden, showing his left hand, which was bandaged: two fingers were missing. "Lucky it was not the right hand."

"When did it occur?" said Ingleton, looking up. He had been following Trevors drawing his plan.

"The first night," answered Hampden. "As soon as we got news from Buerlin, I collected all the members to our Alliance, and held a meeting; then I made for the gun works, and erected a barricade, which fell. While we were trying to re-erect it, a company came upon us. My men stood the fire bravely; we made a rush, and I had my fingers blown off by an iglio bullet."

"You came off lucky," rejoined Glimson.

Trevors had finished, and held up his plan. The streets already barricaded were blacked in, and the positions it was proposed to take were marked in thick black lines. (This plan lies at the Royal Museum, a memento of the strife.) As Trevors had said, the plans embraced four sides of a hexagon, with the Hall of Legislation as headquarters.

Ingleton, having closely examined it, said, "I propose that the plan be accepted in its entire form. Practically it embraces three quarters of London. From it, I say, it would be possible, supposing the soldiers attacked all or any six posts at a given time, we could by pre-arranged signal completely surround them.

"With a dozen cars over them," said Heughin.

"Yes," rejoined Ingleton, "they stood us in good service.

"I have four electric water apperatus laid on," said Wharham. "I propose to lay down one, more powerful than any of the others, in the park."

"Not a bad idea," said Glimson.

"Mark that on the plan," said Ingleton to Trevors, who did so.

"There are the bridges that cross the river," said Burham.

"They are embraced in the plan," answered Ingleton. "To secure the Hall of Legislation, and the different water works, and electric storage houses, we must necessarily secure all bridges."

"And retain them by a strong force," said Glimson.

"Decidedly," rejoined Ingleton.

"Messieurs, beware!" muttered Glimson, with a swing of his arms.

"It would not be a bad idea if, as soon as we become master of any point, to connect it by telephone with headquarters," said Cavendish.

"There would be a great difficulty in carrying this out," said Ingleton.

"Not at all," answered Cavendish. "Streathen is in the Central office. We can obtain the wire and the other necessary appliances; and carry the wires over the houses; then it's done."

"Then it's done," echoed Glimson with a laugh, "but still it is practicable."

"Well, we shall agree to this," said Ingleton.

"Now let us get on," said Bligow, "it is getting late."

For a few minutes all were silent, then Ingleton said, "I will take possession of the Hall of Legislation, and establish my headquarters there.

Glimson shall attack the City Hall ; Bligow, the Hall of Antiquities ; Heughin, the Aerial Station, assisted by Hollis; Beauclerc can occupy his time in the attack of the Park, and fortifying it ; Wharham, the Storage Houses ; Fitzwalter, the air pumps ; Perkins, Baxter, and Burham, the Water Works. Cavendish, take command of the soldiers, and Trevors hold a reserve in the present situation. I will suppose that we have only 400,000 with us in London. Well then, each of us take 20,000 men under his command, that combined means 260,000. Then there are the soldiers under Cavendish (whom Serle can assist), 7,000, 50 surgeons, and 500 assistants." The others smiled at the totaling of the figures. "We must leave 5,000 to do the cooking. We cannot starve."

"As many as that?" queried Bligow.

"I am making a rough calculation. 'A hundred meals to be prepared by each cook. These would include assistants. I think they would require all their time to do it."

"So they would," interposed Glimson.

"So far we have disposed of 272,550, and as we have sufficient men I intend to do everything properly. The telephone station shall have a guard of a 1,000. Who shall take command?"

"Hardale," said Glimson.

"Good," continued Ingleton, "Hardale shall command them. There will be several thousand of ammunition makers, gunsmiths, and such-like, who

must continue their work; so must the electricans and engineers, who attend the lighting of the City. That would turn into 300,000. Now Trevors can hold in reserve 60,000, and the remainder will have their time fully occupied in assisting at the multifarious work, which will have to be undertaken on the spur of the moment.

"You have forgotten the *Half Hour* offices, the Kinteograph Station, the Photophone Station, the Gramophone House, and the Central Music House," said Glimson, in rapid speech.

"Yes," answered Ingleton. "The Kinteograph and the Photophone offices will be useful; we must capture them. As for the *Half Hour* office, the present guard will suffice."

"These are final commands?" asked Cavendish.

"Yes, they will not require any alteration. The day after to-morrow we rise with day-break, and marshall our forces. Separately I will address the people, then each must march to his respective positions, which *must* be taken. As Cavendish has proposed, telephone communication must be established. Hampden can communicate our plans, and establish similar ones wherever the opportunity offers."

"I propose that movable barricades be built to-morrow, and carried away the next morning," said Glimson, with another swing of his arms.

"How can we do that?" queried Ingleton.

"Well, I suppose sheets of iron, rivetted together,

would form a good frontage for a barricade, and that is what I allude to."

"Yes, that would be very useful," said Bligow.

"We accept the proposition," answered Ingleton. "We had better issue a proclamation. I intended to appoint a committee of Public Safety, but as matters are yet undecided, we had better not move till after a decisive success."

"A proclamation—a stirring one," muttered Glimson, but loud enough for all to hear him.

"You had better write it," said Ingleton with a laugh.

A few minutes after, and all took their departure, except Ingleton, who threw himself on the mattress; muttering, as sleep overpowered him, "God, in whose hand is the destiny of the human race, guard and preserve the ailing and the weak." Then he slumbered.

Glimson, who was writing his proclamation, heard the mumbled words, and turning round, looked at the sleeper, and then rose and noiselessly left the tent. The guard, who had been changed, was on duty. The moon was shining in silvery brilliance, and the heavens glistened out with flickering stars. Bathed in moonlight, Glimson surveyed the scene. He gazed at the tents, the distant barrier, and the houses. The aspect seemed to thrill him. Standing still, he murmured, "How many shall have solved the great mystery before two more suns have run their course. Still, it is the result that I look to.

The end must justify the means. The result be—autiful. The course of life is peculiar. The history—where shall I continue it—when the story of these times shall tell the world a tale. Moon, I greet thee as a good omen for the future. What shall it bring? Individuality is everything: who shall attempt to efface it in the future, will have to pay the penalty with his life. Be—autiful. Heigho! this will not finish that proclamation." He re-entered the tent, and seated himself. He heard Ingleton turn round in his sleep, and cry, "Was it the man or the lunatic?" It caused him to spring to his feet. He looked at the sleeping leader, and muttered, "Stocking, you shall pay for this troubled dream."

CHAPTER XXVII.

It was scarce daybreak. The great encampment is astir, now swollen in numbers by thousands who have joined the Individualists during the truce. The dining halls are the centre of the greatest activity. Men come and go, carrying large baskets and cans, with eatables and drinkables. The rations are being served out, and are eaten with avidity and haste. There is no time to eat. As for speaking, but the thinnest of conversation goes on round the camp fires. Look at the faces of the men. Every visage is stern and harsh, every lip drawn, in every eye is a cold, hard look, reflected, perhaps, from the steel of the guns, that are lying about. The breakfast is over, and the real labour of the day commences. Guns are cleaned, bullets distributed, broken weapons replaced by new ones. The ambulance corps, with a dozen electric cars, and piles of bandages, are drawn into a square. Engineers, with wrenches, crowbars, hammers, screws and screw-drivers, and other necessary tools, form into a company.

Cavendish marshalls his soldiers, all well armed, near the cars. Calls and answers fill the air. Slowly the men are brought together, excepting those left in charge of the various barricades and offices. During the night a row of houses had been blown

down (the *debris* being used to fill the gaps in the barricades), to make room for the concourse of people, who fill the immediate neighbourhood of the now destroyed prison.

Ingleton, accompanied by Bligow and Glimson, mounted an ambulance car. The multitude thickens, thronging closer to the improvised platform. Dropping the gun he carried, he said, in a voice loud and passionate: "Friends, through long nights and gloomy days, our ears filled with groans of the wounded, and our eyes dim with tears for the dead, we have struggled for mastery—not for tyranny. Peacefully and honourably the true ends of man's life, his sacred and just rights, were laid before the Government; who, in their greed and avarice, refused them. If our cause is a just one, we had but one course open to us: To take by force what we could not obtain in peace. We accepted the alternative. For this none need reproach themselves. A higher power has destined it all. We, His mere instruments in the cause of humanity, must fulfil our allotted tasks, and sink or swim with the tide that is with or against us. Till now, we have been successful. The instinct of Individuality, bestowed upon man by the Allwise, has asserted itself, as was foreseen, successfully. So far, we have done our duty. Now the decisive moment awaits us. Before the sun, which has hardly risen, shall have set, the fate of the nation will, no doubt, be decided. I do not mean to infer that we can

altogether reform those who, living in idleness, fear for the personal labour they will have to undertake in the future State. But we shall inflict a lasting defeat upon them to-day, if it be God's will, that shall prove to them their own weakness. Now do your duty. Obey your leaders implicitly, and do not hesitate, whether you are told to lay down your arms or raise them in defence of your liberties. One word more. Do not attack the weak; injure no woman or child; do nothing wantonly. Let not the present be characterized by the evil deeds of former revolutions."

Cheers filled the air.

Glimson murmured to himself, "The beginning of the end is passed, the end itself is here. Messieurs, to say beware, is futile; every cheer is a nail in your coffins."

Ingleton and his companions descended from the car. Then a commotion began. Twenty-five abreast they defiled till the whole body was marshalled into serried ranks; behind them came the engineers, then the men carrying portions of the barricades; after them the ambulance corps, and the men with coils of wire for the telephone. The various leaders took up their station in the direction they intended going, and the men formed into fresh companies of five hundred, headed by an officer and subalterns, who had been appointed. With each party went the men with the movable barricades and wire. The engineer-sappers followed Wharham.

Away they marched in silence, leaving Trevors with his reserve, and Cavendish with his soldiers.

The streets through which they marched were deserted, and the city was hushed in silence. Ingleton and his men marched in the direction of the Hall of Legislation. Until they came in sight of the Hall, no opposition was offered. But as they neared, the gleam of the soldiers' helmets became visible.

"Halt!" shouted Ingleton. The whole company stood still. At two hundred paces were the soldiers. Ingleton examined the assembly intently. He would not fall upon them.

"Bring two iglio cannons forward," he shouted.

The two were planted in the centre of the roadway; which being much wider here, Ingleton marshalled his men till they stood more than a hundred abreast. "Fire the cannon," he shouted.

Hastily they were loaded and fired. Away sped the bullets with hissing sound. Then the battle began. Against Ingleton's force were opposed six thousand well trained soldiers. The havoc wrought was awful. Swish went the bullets, falling like hailstones in number.

The Individualists remained firmly in possession.

"Double!" shouted Ingleton, waving his sword. On they rushed, firing as they went, death making furrows in the ranks of the people. At fifty paces Ingleton halted and divided his men into two parties, one to charge and the other to hold themselves in readiness to follow at the command.

The storm of bullets continued. The swish! swish! the puff! puff! and the hissing of the iglio balls was terrible. The rush began again. Ingleton was determined to storm the position. On they ran, over the fallen corpses, till they faced each other. A hand to hand conflict ensued; blow answered blow, thrust met thrust, amid a continued shower of bullets. From the higher terraces of the Hall of Legislation cannon were now brought into play. Whole lines were swept down. Determined and dogged they held their course; unwavering they attacked the soldiery. Ingleton ordered the second company to cross the open space and take the cannon.

On they came, inch for inch was contested; the dead lay in piled heaps, as they fell. On the terraces, slippery and wet (the gates were gone), they charged, up, and captured; twice lost, twice regained. The shrieks of the wounded and those trampled on in the struggle were heart-rendering. Ingleton once more charged the soldiery: they wavered. With redoubled fury the people fought; regiment after regiment were mowed down. The cannon on the terraces were captured and hastily turned on the retreating soldiery. Then Ingleton brought his troops together. The soldiery were annihilated in the charges.

Suddenly, from the rear of them, fresh firing was heard. Wharham, with his men, were contesting the Park, carrying their water pipes with them.

Ingleton now thought it best to adopt a strategic move. He ordered a retreat. Back turned his men. The soldiers were hastily reformed in square. Cannon were planted in the roadway. A rapid fussilade began. Ingleton ordered his men to possess themselves of the Hall of Legislation. In they marched; every corridor, every flight of stairs, was transformed into a miniature battle. From the windows, now in possession of the Individualists, the battle cries were shrieked and shouted in voices of triumph. Ingleton retreated still further with his men. The trap was well baited. The soldiery followed; and under the fire of the marksmen in the windows, the cannonade from the terraces, the firing in the street, they were utterly routed. One side of the square gone, Wharham now brought his electric fluid into play. Thousands of gallons of water, charged with electricity, swept the soldiery from their feet. The retreat of the troops was cut off, and the heavy fusilade continued, while the strength of the electric current was materially increased, till the power of the shock killed, instead of merely felling the men to the ground. Panic stricken by the terrible deaths that were taking place around them, the soldiers attempted to charge those in front, and thus make their escape; but in vain, death awaited them at every turn. A yell of exultation came from the people. Wharham at length turned the water off, and the firing ceased. The Park and the Hall of Legislation were gained.

To return to Fitzwalter. With the aid of his party, he possessed himself of the air pumps at the north end of the town, while Hollis captured those on the west. Fitzwalter immediately on possession tested all the apparatus. Meanwhile, direct telephone communication was established between the pumps and Streathan's office, with whom Ingleton had already been able to open communication. Fitzwalter having ordered a strong body of men to guard the air pumps, sent the remainder to Glimson's assistance, who had met with a check in the capture of the City Hall.

Heughin, with his cars, was high in the clouds; he, alone, was some hundred yards away from the rest, and on the look out. The car which he occupied was of entirely different model to those in ordinary use, altogether presenting a smaller frontage; it had a larger surface for attack, by reason of two great wings which were propelled by electricity.

In all directions the battle was now raging fast and furious. From all points of the compass the tramp of men, the cries, and noise of the bullets, could be heard. At the City Hall the fates seemed against Glimson, to whom was opposed a large force of soldiers under the command of the Senators and members of the Convention. Glimson, cool under a heavy fire which shot his hat from his head, and a bullet which carried away a piece of his left ear, stood, gun in hand, picking the victims off with wonderful precision. Hardale, the senior member

for Newcastle, was one of his first victims. But, despite this, and that Glimson never budged an inch during the struggle, his men began to waver under the heavy cannonade which assailed them from the windows. The lines thinning minute by minute, dismay spread among the Individualists. They drew back from the fire. Glimson again rallied them, and, with a cry of "Down with the State!" charged the soldiers. His impetuous manner inspired his men with courage; they followed him; but the charge was ineffectual. Glimson, dogged as ever, retreated for a hundred paces, and hastily had a barricade erected to protect his men from the heavy fire. He now sent for Cavendish and his soldiers, meanwhile holding his position under the whizzing bullets.

To his delight, Fitzwalter's men now arrived. The movable barricade taken down, a fresh onslaught was made. Glimson fell upon the soldiery with redoubled fury. How grim was the fight; how stern the reality of battle; how puny its glory! This charge had a better result than the previous one. Glimson planted his guns, but was obliged to desert them, because of the continuous fussilade from the windows. Cavendish arrived with his fresh men. He examined the situation intently, and noting the exact line of range of the battery in the windows of the Hall, drew his men to the left, charged at a battery under the command of Mr. Hedgeco, who had erected it at an acute

angle in the roadway. Cavendish advanced slowly at first, then rushed the range of the upper battery, and charged at the lower. Steady and true his men stood the fire. Mr. Hedgeco, exasperated at the deadly onslaught made upon his position, hastily sent for aid, but nowhere could the men be spared. Cavendish continued his attack. Mr. Hedgeco, leaving his battery, charged at Cavendish, who, taking advantage of the opportunity, pressed his opponents hotly, until he gained the battery, then, bringing his men on, took possession of them, and turned them on his foes. Glimson, noting the turn of the tide, sent part of Fitzwalter's men to Cavendish, who gave them a chance to display their courage, by ordering them to assail the building itself.

The contest grew hotter and hotter as the soldiery gave way. The phono-chronometer, giving no heed to the deadly strife that took place below it, bawled the third hour of the afternoon, before the Individualists had taken complete possession of the City Hall, and telephonic communication was rendered possible with Ingleton at headquarters.

By this time the Individualists had possessed themselves of all the positions arraigned in their plan, except the Hall of Antiquities, at which the strife seemed endless. From the position of this establishment, the soldiery had a great advantage, preventing Bligow from coming within a hundred paces of the Hall, by establishing strong batteries at the angles of the streets.

In fact, from the early morning till this hour, the situation seemed unchanged; and Bligow, wearied by such unsuccessful work, determined to entrench himself in the position, and by barricading the streets facing the batteries, compel a surrender by surrounding the troops. Already some houses were blown down, and the erection of a barricade commenced. Then, from the semi-obscurity of the darkening heavens, there suddenly came a great flash of blue light.

High above in the air a battle was taking place—Heughin's company of cars against a host of cars of the State. Higher and higher Heughin ascended, the others following slower: Now and again the blue flash was repeated—it was Heughin's signal to his men. Seeing that a larger force was opposed to him, Heughin determined to defeat them by rising above them, and take advantage of the superior range. The opposing cars sailed majestically by, unheeding those overhead. Heughin, in his little car, made for the attack. Closing the wings of his car, he descended with incredible swiftness on a car below him, at the same time pressing a sharp-pointed ram from the bottom of his conveyance. Down he came on his opponents, the point bursting through the roof. It had pierced the gas cistern, and the car was rapidly descending. Releasing his ram, and extending his wings, away went Heughin, his cars joining him. A heavy fire was now opened on those below. Seeing their disadvantage, for the rattling

bullets were rapidly succeeded by iglio charges, which wrought heavy damage on them, they attempted to rise; but Heughin, knowing the advantage he held, and having a lighter car than any other, ascended into the clouds, descending again with an eagle swoop, and this time breaking the steering gear of the car he attacked.

This struggle in the air was continued until the darkness prevented further attack. Those below, in the streets, did not know the result, but guessed by the falling cars, which crushed their occupants in their rapid descent, that Heughin still held the mastery. Meanwhile, news having reached Ingleton of Bligow's position, he ordered him to withdraw while under the cover of darkness.

Wharham laid a mile of hose-pipe, and attacked the soldiery with his electric-charged water. In the darkness the soldiery fell dead one by one as the fluid caught them, and the officers in charge were compelled to withdraw from the position they had so boldly held. Bligow began a fresh attack in the dark. The soldiery, discouraged by the death of those of their comrades, killed by an unseen hand, grew alarmed; and the blue flashes which continued at intervals, increasing the uncertainty of their fate, they fled, leaving their arms and accoutrements on the scene of battle.

Ingleton now established his headquarters in the Hall of Legislation; and on learning that the Hall of Antiquities was in the possession of Bligow's troops,

issued orders that great fires be lit to dispel the darkness. Hardly had this order been issued, when some one claimed admittance to the chambers Ingleton occupied. It was the dark-bearded man who had saved his life at the barricade. He now introduced himself as Roger Collingwood.

Ingleton looked at him as he uttered the surname, so well known to him. His face no longer wore its old look of despair.

"You have rendered me a great service," said Ingleton.

"A matter of little importance," answered Mr. Collingwood. "What I wish to see you about is this,—I am informed that you are acquainted with a young lady, Blanche Collingwood by name."

Ingleton nodded, blushing to the roots of his hair.

"Will you tell me where she lives," continued Mr. Collingwood. "I suspect she is my daughter." The words came slowly, and a tremor seized his frame. "For years I have not seen her. I fear that at any moment I may be killed, and before that occurs I wish to see my child." Tears stood in his eyes; he was greatly agitated.

Ingleton remained silent for a moment. It was time to see his mother, sisters, and Blanche. The thought overpowered him.

"You suspect that the Miss Collingwood in question is your daughter. No doubt this may be so. Does she know you?"

"I hardly think so. She was a mere child when she saw me last," continued Mr. Collingwood.

"Well, I shall be going to my home in a few minutes," said Ingleton; "perhaps she is there; if not, I will see her later on, and ascertain your position. If I find she is related to you, I will prepare her for your reception, and send for you; will not that be better than taking the girl by surprise?"

"Yes; so it would," rejoined Mr. Collingwood.

"Well then, seat yourself here. I have some work to do, and I must see several of my friends before I can leave here," said Ingleton.

Mr. Collingwood seated himself, burying his face in his hands.

Ingleton continued writing; while every few minutes the ring of the telephone bell brought fresh news from all directions.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

WHEN at length Ingleton made his way homeward, fires were lit, and in the glare his face exhibited the workings of his passions. He, who had so bravely fought for the people's welfare, feared the home-coming. Throughout the weary days it had been his greatest longing, and many times the home-sickness possessed him so strong that he fain would have left all to return to his relatives.

Now, as he walked, a great fear came over him, not that he doubted the welcome, but into his throat came a lump, and into his eyes sprang the tears, he knew not why.

Once at home, the mist was dispelled. His mother fondled and caressed him as if he were a child, and Nell could not find utterance for the joy at her brother's return.

Seated by the stove, he recounted the history of the battles; the days in prison; his thoughts; his anxieties; his fears; and the sympathetic listeners laughed and wept as the tale proceeded. Still Ingleton feared to ask about Blanche and Katie.

The hours flew quickly; and Blanche, accompanied by Mrs. Berthon, arrived.

Blanche, somewhat pale, threw herself in her lover's arms. Words, mere words, were useless,

out of place for two souls knit together by the great bond of love. Again Ingleton recounted his tale of the absent days; and during the recital Mrs. Berthon grew more and more polite; and when Ingleton told her of Pelham Stocking's madness, her eyes grew larger, and the harsh colour seemed to flicker, and she murmured, "It is enough."

Remembering his strange acquaintance, waiting for news, Ingleton remarked,—

"Among the men who were at my side in the battle, was a tall, bearded man, bearing some resemblance to Blanche."

Mrs. Berthon looked up, and said, "Strange."

"Yes! there was a striking resemblance; and he saved my life," said Ingleton.

"When will the strife end?" queried Mrs. Berthon, attempting to change the subject.

But Ingleton, seeing the impression his words had produced upon Mrs. Berthon, continued—"His name is Roger."

"Roger, Roger," murmured Blanche; "that was my father's name."

"Not a common name either," said Nell, understanding that her brother did not hold to the subject without reason.

"Strange," said Ingleton, "I have not got his name complete, but his surname began Col——"

Blanche, understanding the drift of the speech, said, "Hold me no longer in suspense. My father!"

In broken accents she uttered the last word, and then commenced crying.

"My brother Roger," said Mrs. Berthon.

At this moment a turning box opened, and announced Miss Smithers. She was accompanied by a stranger, who was known to her.

Into the room she came, introducing her companion. Blanche rose from her chair. Roger Collingwood identified her, and said,—

"Blanche—my daughter."

"Father," was the monosyllabic answer, and she flung her arms round his neck. "Where have you been all these years?" she asked between her sobs.

The others now left the room, father and daughter remaining together. As Mrs. Ingleton left, she murmured, "My mother always told me how things would happen. It is bound to come right, or wrong."

"You ask me where I have been, my child. Mine is a sad and weary story to relate," he replied, with a long-drawn sigh. "Fourteen long dark years I have been pent up amidst criminals. Had it lasted longer, I fear I should have lost my reason; and yet, now I know it, I committed no crime to merit such a fate as that.

"Tell me, father," she asked beseechingly, as she clung close to him, "how was it that such a dreadful fate o'ertook you? Ah! ah!" she added, putting her hand to her forehead in her effort to recall the past, "Oh, now the mystery of these

strange, fugitive notes that came to me by Antony's hand is clearing. For days and days did I ponder, endeavouring to find a means of identifying the writer of those lines, but I could not from Antony. I failed to gather anything like a reliable clue; and, at last, in sheer despair, I began to believe you dead."

"Oh, Antony, poor fellow, his heart is of gold. He essayed to serve me to the best of his powers, such as they were; but my imprisonment seemed to have killed his perception altogether. For weeks running he was the bearer to you of those cypher notes. I sent them, thinking you might succeed, with Antony's assistance, in deciphering them, and thus assure yourself, at least, that I was not dead."

"Ah! many a time I thought the mysterious cyphers bore reference to your sudden disappearance. Something, some indiscernible feeling that told me so; but it was all so strange, so sudden, and I was then so young. I had none to aid me, or advise me; and Aunt Berthon, to whom once or twice I appealed to in my anxiety, could give me no clue. Then, too, Pelham Stocking would continually hold up before my terrified mind the dismal picture of your alleged misdeeds, dear father—misdeeds of which he alone, he said, held the secret, and the reflection from which would ever embitter my existence, and fall like a darkening shadow across my path, unless I chose to purchase his silence by accepting him as my husband. Oh, the torture of

it! The weeks of agony that man has caused me! And to none could I confine my feelings. Aunt was always so cold and distant!"

Mr. Collingwood frowned; his eyes darkened at the mention of his sister's name. "Your aunt," he said, in sullen tones, "was no true friend to you; do not deceive yourself, dear, by thinking she is. 'Tis all simulation. She aided and abetted Pelham Stocking in his diabolical plot against me, for she bore me a grudge she could never forget, because I could not forgive her cold, almost brutal treatment of her ailing husband, and her revengeful spirit. She eagerly availed herself of the opportunity offered by Pelham Stocking, in distorting the circumstance in such a way that general suspicion fell upon me instead of upon him—the real culprit—as the person who had forged your poor uncle's name, in order to swindle the Government out of an extra allowance of credit. After procuring, in his own crafty way, and with the aid of your aunt, as I have since learnt, my conviction, Stocking completed his despicable scheme by getting me incarcerated in the State prison. All this I now know from papers found at Stocking's house.

"And now, after these terrible years of separation," continued he, with increasing emotion, "what life there is left me I shall spend by the side of you, my darling child, under the hospitable roof of your future husband, who is, indeed, a prince among men."

Stooping, he pressed an ardent, affectionate kiss upon his daughter's lips, and seating himself on the couch, he drew Blanche towards him.

Nell and her brother had repaired to the room where Katie lay. His worst fears were confirmed as he saw the child laying in her delirious sleep. Has she been like this ever since I have been away?"

"Yes," answered Nell.

The child gave utterance to the word "James, James." She repeated it.

Ingleton softly answered, "Yes, dear, I am here."

The child continued to toss about the bed, and repeated the name at every turn.

"What says the doctor?" queried Ingleton, drawing away from the bedside.

"He hopes for the best," answered Nell.

The hope was so bitter, it was such a tone of anguish, it meant so much, this key-note of despair.

A few minutes more were spent at the bedside, and Ingleton had to return to headquarters.

* * * *

For a week after this the strife was continued in the provinces, and Ingleton sent detachments to the north, till the guardians of the State were entirely routed. Near the old town of Warwick the last battle was fought. A gallant stand was made, but before the overpowering numbers the soldiery gave way. Mr. Hedgeco was killed, and so were many other members of the Senate. Crestfallen and cut off from all help, the army surrendered.

Meanwhile, a Committee of Public Safety was appointed, which directed the affairs of the nation, until a general concensus of opinion would decide the new form of government.

The *Voice of the People*, the new newspaper, was issued, and all slowly began to settle down to their usual habits.

The last barricade being cleared away, and the last shot fired, it was time for the Committee to bring their proposals before the people.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE thoroughfares leading to the park were thronged with eager crowds of men and women—aye, children, too—wending in unbroken streams along the highways and byeways, until the park gates were reached.

At that point, a score of men bearing rods of office were stationed; and as the throngs of people approached, they marshalled them to the wooden benches grouped for their accommodation around the large central enclosure, in which a raised platform had been arranged for the speakers.

For more than two hours the human stream continued to pour through the open gates to their allotted places, without noise, without confusion, but with a concentrated eagerness depicted on every face, that amply made up for the absence of cheers and hurrahs! The echo of the mid-day hour, as it boomed from the phono-chronometer, had scarce died away when, amid the breathless, almost solemn silence of the immense multitude, Ingleton, escorted by a group of men who had taken a prominent part in the late struggles, ascended the central platform. Then it was that the storm broke loose.

At the sight of their plucky, unselfish young leader, the pent-up feelings of the people burst into one great roar of cheering, that rang away in a

thousand echoes through the leafless boughs of the venerable oaks which, during the last century, had been the silent witnesses of so many popular demonstrations.

The cheering subdued, Ingleton, in a voice strikingly impressive and calm, addressed the assemblage.

"Englishmen and women—With much hesitation and diffidence do I stand before you to-day to address you. The occasion is so great, so all-important, the issues which it involves so portentous, that I may well ask you to pardon me—a man of comparative youth—in presuming to address you, many of whom must be by many years my seniors. But I trust that your opinion may be that what I lack in years, I may make up in earnestness of purpose. Fellow citizens! For nearly a quarter of a century our beloved country has been governed on the system—so much advocated in the latter days of a previous era—of social equality! That was the battle cry of the men who, in all honesty of purpose, thought they had discovered the panacea for all the ills of humanity. Well, they found their followers,—demagogues, who had nothing to lose and all to gain by the change; and so the loud-voiced theories of the universal levellers were at length put into practice. And they lost no time, those brave theorists, nor did they stick at trifles. They smoothed down all and everything to one dull level, and behold, now, after 25 years' trial, what has it produced! Universal dis-

content, mutiny, and the complete subversal of the State. The individual intellect and power of the nation has proved too strong, too irresistible, and now the levellers are crushed. They have had their day; and now that we stand at the threshold of a new, may it prove, a glorious epoch, it behoves us all to act as men and women of intelligence and principle, and to think no sacrifice too great, if it helps to place the State on a firm and broad basis. To do this, all of us must be prepared to place at the service of our country all the energies of which they are possessed. Every one of us must feel that he or she is an important and indispensable component part of the commonwealth; and let our watchword be individualism! Let us glance for a moment down the centuries that have gone before, and what do we see? That all that has been achieved in the world, all that is great and glorious, has been effected by the power of individualism, by individual might and individual intellect, and wherever the free bent of human individuality has been left unchecked and untrammelled, the many have benefited by the genius of the few. Inequality there must be always. Nature, the all-wise, the omniscient power that sustains the universe, has not created us all in one mould, or cast us in one uniform character, either mental, moral, or physical. But each of its multifarious forms of beings, each and all, even the lowest, has its place, its work, its objects assigned to it; and for us, the representatives

of the highest form of creation, it is meet to acquit ourselves without murmuring, with goodwill and cheerfulness, of the duties which we may find appropriate to our individual capacities. And as oil remains visible on the surface of the waters, so the power of individual character will ever lift talent, capacity, genius, above the heads of their fellows, and all attempts at levelling, at equalising the nation, must end as ignominiously as has the Social State in this dear Britain of ours.

"Yet, with the spirit of Individualism left free and untrammelled, there are duties great and important which the State, as a collective body, must undertake to carry out on behalf of the citizens. Of these, the duty of providing education broad and unstinted stands first and foremost. Our schools must be national, and free to all those who are unable to pay for their children's education; and every one of us, in proportion to his income, must be called upon to contribute towards the education of his own children on this basis. And in whatever bent the individual minds of our children may be formed, in that direction must they be developed, so that the result to the State shall be satisfactory in the highest degree. In education, as in everything else, there shall not be any more levelling. As Nature has so ordained it that the very young and the very old, who cannot maintain themselves, shall be dependent on those of us that are still in the full powers of middle life, so the State shall take under its control

and protection these two classes amongst us, the aged infirm, and the young. And now, fellow citizens, I call upon any of you who choose to address us, and thank you for the hearing you have given me."

Amid ringing applause, Ingleton then stepped back on the platform, and Glimson came forward to harangue the assembly, he being followed by several others of the prominent leaders in the revolution; and in another hour the vast, imposing concourse had dispersed in as orderly a manner as it had assembled, and the beautiful park was once more left to its peaceful seclusion.

The 20th of December was the day fixed by the Committee of Public Safety for a *plebiscite* for or against a Constitutional Monarchy; and the Hall of Legislation was crowded, from mid-day to midnight, by throngs who eagerly availed themselves of the privileges of Universal Suffrage, similar scenes taking place simultaneously in every part of the country.

The next day the ballot was declared; and the result, which was an overpowering vote in favour of the Monarchy, was proclaimed by James Ingleton from the terraced steps of the great building, and was received with vociferous enthusiasm by the dense crowds that filled the wide open space in front of the edifice.

The following day a special edition of the *Voice of the People* was issued, containing the proclama-

tion of the Committee of Public Safety. Its terms read thus:—

"CITIZENS OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS!

"We, the members of the Committee of Public Safety, in conclave assembled, do hereinafter set forth the principal Laws by which this country will be governed, in accordance with your votes as registered at the Hall of Legislation.

"1. The form of government of the territories of Great Britain and Ireland shall be that of a Constitutional Monarchy.

"2. The Sovereign shall receive a fixed Civil List, as determined by majority of votes in the Houses of Parliament.

"3. The members of Parliament shall be returned to the two Houses by their respective constituencies for a period of three years, after which they shall again be eligible for election.

"4. Constituencies consisting of over 100,000 inhabitants, shall send two representatives to Parliament. Those numbering less, one each.

"5. Deputies shall be paid a yearly allowance by their respective constituents, at a rate to be hereinafter determined, if the ratepayers decide so.

"6. The local interests of the county shall be vested in the assemblies of the County Parliament, to which every county shall send a deputy, or deputies, in proportion to its population. The decisions arrived at by such County Parliament shall be sub-

mitted for final sanction to the Houses of the Legislature (which otherwise shall deal with the general affairs of the Kingdom), to be subject, in the last resort, to the Royal Veto.

"7. Against the decisions of the Houses of Parliament, or against their acts, there shall be no appeal.

"8. Parliament shall, at the beginning and end of each session, be opened and closed by the Sovereign in person, unless he be prevented by *force majeure*.

"9. Under the newly constituted Monarchy, education shall be entirely free in all its branches, including the higher sciences, arts, music, and literature, to those who cannot pay for same.

"10. All persons on arriving at the age of sixty-five, who are British subjects, and all others who shall have resided for twenty-five years in the country, shall be entitled, in consideration of the rates and taxes which he or she shall have contributed, directly or indirectly, to receive an annual pension at a rate to be hereafter determined, and which shall suffice to support him or her in comfort, always provided they have no personal means of support.

"11. Those persons, who on reaching the age of sixty-five, shall be found possessed of the means of living, shall not be entitled to receive the pensions aforesaid.

"12. Free grants of land for agricultural purposes shall be made to such as shall satisfy the

authorities that they possess adequate knowledge of husbandry, and means of working the same. The government shall stipulate the sum to be paid it by such persons on the land granted to them becoming productive.

"13. Persons who cannot find employment shall be supplied with temporary work of miscellaneous nature, and suited to their capacities, by Government.

"14. All persons unwilling to perform the work so allotted to them, or who shall misconduct themselves, or act in any way that may be considered injurious to the State, shall be imprisoned during the pleasure of Parliament.

"15. All churches and denominations shall have absolute freedom of public worship, which shall, in all cases, be conducted within enclosed walls.

"16. No religious procession of any kind shall be allowed in the public streets.

"17. There shall be no State church.

"18. The monetary currency is re-established on the decimal system, and the Government shall be the sole issuer of the specie.

"In the name of the Committee of Public Safety."
(Here followed the signatures.)

CHAPTER XXX.

THERE is an interregnum, and the Committee of Public Safety still issues its orders.

But it is to Ingleton's little sister we must now turn.

Wan grow her cheeks, while the hectic tints grow fainter. The shadows come and go in the wintry sun. Look, they rise from behind the child's head; they glide, glide upwards, till they disappear. But by Katie they are unseen, these visitors of the far off.

How the little thin lips tremble—how the clammy, pallid hands, damp with death's dews, twitch with nervous convulsion.

Yet the shadows recur. They lengthen as the days draw out, and that corner grows darker by contrast. Yet the tenacious life holds out.

One morning, a wild shriek rends the air. The child springs up in terror, hurls the bed-clothes from her, and then falls back foaming at the mouth, and with her sightless eyes wide open. The watchers at the bedside rush forward, fearing the end has come. Ingleton is hastily summoned from the Council Chamber. It is but a momentary flicker in which life comes, and glides away, to leave the form prostrate and apparently dead. Silently they stand as the doctor

(with whom special cases seem no longer a desideratum) tenderly lifts the pulse, and feels its feeble beating. They moisten the lips, and slowly life returns; slowly and weakly the body heaves, and the fingers unclasp. The convulsion is over. Antony —the mist before his eyes increasing as the tears fall—vows not to leave the bedside.

Again the shadows flit away into the eternity of the unknown. The pallid lips move, and the words "James, James," is constantly heard.

Then comes the delirium, in which the past mingles with the present, and the mind runs riot. The child shrieks and groans, and tosses in the bed like a storm beaten ship.

The lucid intervals serve but the more to sharpen the contrast. Yet the days grow brighter, and the occasional glimpse of sunlight is so cheering that the fancy of the May blossoms' gratefully fragrant bloom comes to the senses. But the child knows it not, and the doctor's composing draughts are of little avail.

At length, one morning, the sun shines not, and a grey mist is in the air. A quietness pervades all nature, as though she were bidding wearied life to be at rest.

Ingleton remains by the bedside with Nell and Antony. In the adjoining room, Blanche is comforting Mrs. Ingleton, whose sobbing can be heard at frequent intervals.

Miss Smithers and Dr. Shindle enter the sick-chamber. The doctor examines his patient.

"The delirium is over," he says mournfully, and looking through the casement, he sees the falling snow. "Yes, it snows; the ground is covered with the white pall. When this snow-storm ceases, the soul will have fled," and he left the room quickly, to hide his emotion.

The day is waning. The hectic flush on the child's face deepens; the cold, clammy perspiration increases.

The watchers stand near the bedside. Antony, controlling his features, heaves a sigh, as he holds the child's hand.

Suddenly, Katie springs up. "I see! I see!" she cries, and falls back—dead.

Draw the curtain; tread softly, and speak quietly, for the spirit has fled—fled whither?

Antony's eyes grow dimmer; he is silent.

A week passes by quickly; and the events of the hour are a consolation for the mourner, James Ingleton. Dispatches are received that the emissaries have been successful in their errand, and that Edward Guelph will accept the throne upon the conditions proposed. Preparations are immediately made, and the City re-echoes with noise of tools, now on peaceful mission bent.

On the last day of that week, Glimson met Ingleton outside the Hall of Legislation; with him was a coarse-looking man, Jenkins, late officer of the Hall of Justice.

"Let us go to Pelham Stocking," said Glimson; "he wishes to see you."

"Yes," said Jenkins, "come."

"Upon my word, you are quite voluble," remarked Glimson to Jenkins.

"He wants to see me, does he?" said Ingleton. "Here, go to 54, Liberation Square, and tell Mr. Collingwood to repair to where Stocking is at present."

"Right," answered Jenkins in his gruff voice; and he sped away.

"What does he want?" queried Ingleton.

"He is going to confess—kneel down—be-autiful—ask forgiveness. You give it—beautiful," rejoined Glimson cynically.

"Come along then," said Ingleton.

When they arrived at the asylum, Mr. Collingwood, Antony, and Jenkins were there.

They were shown into a room by a warder. Directly after, Stocking appeared: his hair matted; his eyes having a cold, nervous look; his face bearing evidence of the struggle he had lately undergone. Thin and cadaverous, no longer the familiar smile upon his countenance, he bore but slight resemblance to the Pelham Stocking of former days.

As he looked round, he shuddered; and, tottering to a seat, exclaimed, "Forgive."

"Come, let us have some little explanation," said Glimson. "The first man you injured was Mr. Collingwood."

That party stepped forward, and, speaking in indignant tones, said,—

"Ten years I suffered imprisonment because of you—viper that you are!"

"True," answered Stocking. "I committed a forgery, and cast the blame on you. I did it. Yes; I know I did it."

"And for that *I* suffered!" The tone was perceptively warmer.

"You suffered! How I suffered." Stocking clenched his hands. "I suffered."

"What else have you done?" queried Ingleton.

"I thought him dead," answered Stocking. "Him—yes, him," pointing to Antony. "One night—oh! that night!" (he trembled violently,)—"I followed him, and—I strangled him—strangled—dead—and threw him in the river"—(the eyes grew wilder as he shook his head)—"threw him in the river—the tide carried him away—dead! What agony I have suffered!"

"Yes; I saw you carry something, and heard a splash," growled Jenkins.

"Splash!" splash!" but he is not dead; he is here," continued Stocking. "Antony," the voice rang with terror, "I was mad."

Ingleton turned to him again and said, "What more misdeeds?"

"More than once I tried to kill you, and get rid of you—kill you, do you hear," came from Stocking's lips. "I fired at you, laid traps for you; was a traitor to your cause—traps. Ah! ah! ah!"—the laugh echoed through the room—"I love Blanche

Collingwood. I set Mrs. Berthon against you." He stopped and began laughing—"Where is old Slowun, eh! where is he?"

"Dead," answered Glimson."

"Dead! you say—dead! Ah! ah! ah! dead!" ejaculated Stocking. "Dead!—who is dead?" Then, as if mocking himself, "Dead! Slowun is dead! Ah! ah! ah!" He sprang from his chair and fell back. "Antony is not—dead! Ah! ah! ah! Curse them! Curse them all!" he began mumbling; and his eyes shone with a fitful glare.

It was time to end the scene. Glimson rang a bell. Stocking watched him, and sprang up. The demoniacal laugh rang out once more. He commenced raving and shouting as the keepers bore him away—"Dead! dead! dead!"

* * * * *

Forty-eight hours before the arrival of Edward Guelph, future king of England, James Ingleton and Blanche Collingwood were united quietly, by reason of the recent death. Their courtship, interspersed by a civil war, was consummated amid the cheerful hope of better days.

His Majesty, Edward VII., landed from an aerial car at Dover; and from the old Castle a royal salute was once more fired. On his way from Dover to London, he was escorted by a mighty host, which continued increasing till the Metropolis was reached. Huge bonfires were lit, the bells rang out, and a

general rejoicing was the order of the hour on the evening of his arrival.

He was a tall, handsome man, browned by the sun, with a kind and dignified look, and seemed very much at his ease amid this display, so novel to him.

Ingleton, accompanied by the Members of the Committee of Public Safety, welcomed him, and escorted him with a guard of honour to the centre of the Park, where a grand dais, resplendent with gorgeous tints, had been erected. As His Majesty ascended the dais, the park became transformed into one sea of colour, by the aid of a bright array of electric lamps. The people came trooping in their thousands to welcome the king.

Ingleton having presented the sovereign with the necessary papers of State, which he signed, then spoke: "I have a few words to say to your Majesty and the people. The Social State is now a thing of the past, a bad dream to look back upon, and from which we can learn a great lesson. Now, each man has obtained his individual freedom and rights; now that we are no longer serfs to great or little tyrants, it behoves us to strive in the future to act as men and women who wish for the best, and who mean to have it. I know that there will ever be those who will attempt to pervert all God's gifts to evil purposes. But the future looks bright; the weary hours are over. Let us look forward to the roseate dawn."

Then the king addressed the multitude.

"With feelings of inmost emotion," he said, "I accept the throne—to return to the home of my ancestors, after a long absence. A heavy task awaits me. Yet I accept it, trusting to receive the help of all England in the maintenance of peace. Not a few proposals and conditions were laid before me by those who have acted as the guides of the English people. All those I cheerfully agreed to, seeing they were intended for the nation's good. Acknowledging the great and all-powerful principle of Individualism, I trust it will ever be maintained. On this principle I accept this throne, so that its influence may spread far and wide. Further, I declare that I will hearken to all counsel given to me, and that James Ingleton—the man who has done more for this country than ever I shall be able to do—shall remain my right hand. Thank Heaven the Constitutional Monarchy is re-established in a country where it had its first home."

The crowd burst out into loud and repeated cheering. From end to end of the park the joyful sound was carried through the streets, and a general acclamation resounded through the city. In a voice, loud and unmistakable, the nation shouted, "Long live the King!"

Some months have passed since the King's entry into London. James Ingleton, beloved by the nation, admired by his friends, happy in the brightness of his married life, has been elected Prime Minister of the Kingdom. Mark Glimson, who, it

is rumoured, is enamoured of Ingleton's sister Nell, can be found any afternoon in his office as Secretary of the Home Department. The history of the past is forgotten in the pressure of his new duties.

Buerlin, who has been entrusted with the Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs, shows marked ability. Those who would know his opinions on current affairs, should consult his diary.

Bligow, jovial as ever, received a good appointment, and so did Fitzwalter. Cavendish was promoted from a private citizen to a superior officer in the army. Walter Wharham is chief engineer to the Government, and his words are listened to eagerly. William Heughin, priding himself on his Saxon descent (witness his flaxen hair and his light blue eyes), is working at an invention of his, although he has not yet circumvented the globe in four and twenty hours. The celebrated trio—Perkins, Burham, and Baxter, occasionally come across Burrows, their quondam overseer, and greet him with a contemptuous whistle. Dixon, Hardale, and Vickers, will soon reach the goal of their ambition, and be men of means. Miss Smithers visits her relatives very often, and in her brusque manner generally manages to impress all with whom she comes in contact. Mrs. Berthon rapidly falls into her new groove. As for Mr. Collingwood, he is happy and contented now; and occasionally he visits Pelham Stocking, who is still mad. Little Georgie, in her

childish innocence, finds it rather difficult to call "that nice man," James Ingleton, "uncle," although it is not the real relationship between them.

To three more who have assisted to fill these pages we must refer. Thompson, blithe and gay, once or twice mourns the loss of Mr. B. M. Slowun, and occasionally finds a gloomy satisfaction in recounting to his boon companions the eccentricities of the late President of the Young Alliance. Sometimes he will even go through a performance, which always concludes with one of his celebrated war dances.

Yonder comes a lady, who, since we first met her, has grown white haired. The hands of time are upon her, the joy of her son's great position mingles with the sorrow of her recent loss, and she mutters to herself, "My mother always told me things would come right in the end." Who would deny it?

Once more we look around. Antony comes towards us, his face more wrinkled and crabbed than ever. His eyes peer through the mist that nature has cast around him, and he shouts,—

"HURRAH FOR MERRY ENGLAND."

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